

The University of Chicago
Library







THE CHILDREN'S PULPIT

AIMS AND IDEALS OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

Forty-eight Lessons for Bible Classes and Study Circles, by various Contributors. Edited by the Rev. J. R. Lumb. Paper, 2s. 6d., cloth, 3s. 6d.

WHAT WE BELIEVE AND WHAT WE DO

Fifty-two Lessons on the Church Catechism for use in Sunday Schools and at the Children's Service. By the Rev. H. Caiger. 2s.

THE ODYSSEY OF ISRAEL

The Story of the Old Testament for Modern Readers. By T. G. Platten. 3s. 6d.

THE LATER PAULINE EPISTLES

Text of the Revised Version with Introduction, Notes and Questions. By E. A. Gardiner. 4s.

A SCHOOL SERVICE BOOK

By George Snow. 2s.

S.P.C.K., London

THE CHILDREN'S PULPIT

*Sermons and Addresses, for the use of Clergy
and Teachers, by various writers*

With an Essay on Talking to Children by
THE BISHOP OF BRISTOL

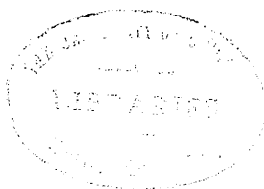
Edited by
J. R. LUMB, M.A.
RECTOR OF CHISLEHURST

LONDON
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, W.C.2
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN CO.

BV4315-

.L92

First published in 1936



MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN

Dis.

1518173

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	ix
The Editor.	
ON TALKING TO CHILDREN	xv
The Rt. Rev. C. S. Woodward, D.D., Bishop of Bristol.	
I. THE CHRISTIAN YEAR	
CHAP.	
1. "LOOKING FORWARD" TIME	1
The Editor.	
2. THE BOY WHO MISSED CHRISTMAS	10
Miss Eleanor Martin, N.F.U.	
3. HOW TO USE LENT (QUINQUAGESIMA)	16
Miss C. R. Newby, B.A., S.Th., Principal of St. Christopher's College, Blackheath.	
4. YOUR PALM CROSS	20
The Rev. A. E. O. Anderson, B.A.	
5. THE COURAGE OF JESUS (GOOD FRIDAY)	24
The Rev. Hugh Caiger, B.A.	
6. THE NEW LIFE (EASTER DAY)	31
The Rev. C. E. Jarman, Diocesan Inspector, Archdeaconry of Salop.	
7. THE JOY THAT LASTS (THE FORTY DAYS OF EASTERTIDE)	37
The Rev. E. D. Sedding, S.S.J.E.	
8. THE CROWNING OF THE KING (ASCENSION DAY)	43
The Rev. P. B. Thorburn, A.K.C.	
9. THE HOLY STAIRS (ASCENSION DAY)	50
The Rev. H. W. Thorne, M.A., Director of Religious Education, Diocese of Rochester.	
10. THE POWER FOR TO-DAY (WHITSUNDAY)	55
The Rev. P. R. Grove, B.D.	

CHAP.		PAGE
11.	" I OUGHT: I CAN: I MUST " (HARVEST) The Rev. Canon Blofeld, B.A.	61
12.	THE LIVING STONES (DEDICATION FESTIVAL) The Rev. A. Jessop Price, M.A., Headmaster of the Choir School, Chester.	65

II. WORSHIP AND PRAYER

1.	HOW TO SAY OUR PRAYERS	75
	The Rev. G. W. Skeet, M.A., Adviser in Religious Educa- tion, Diocese of Manchester.	
2.	HELPS TO WORSHIP IN CHURCH (I)	81
	By the Rev. H. P. Statham, M.A., formerly Assistant Inspector of Schools, Diocese of Southwark.	
3.	HELPS TO WORSHIP IN CHURCH (II)	87
	The Rev. H. P. Statham.	
4.	HANDS THAT LINK	92
	Miss Doris Dent (National Society).	
5.	" LISTENING IN "	100
	The Rev. J. D. Stewart, formerly Director of Religious Education, Diocese of Ely.	
6.	INTERCESSION	107
	The Rev. Canon A. L. Woodard, M.A.	

III. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

1.	THE DOOR OF OUR LIPS	115
	The Rev. C. R. Montgomery.	
2.	IN THE PATH OF THE SUN (MISSIONARY)	120
	The Rev. H. P. Thompson, M.A., Editorial Secretary, S.P.G.	
3.	FOLLOWING THE SHEPHERD	127
	The Rev. P. B. Thorburn, A.K.C.	
4.	" TUESDAY'S CHILD "	135
	The Editor.	
5.	GOD LETS US CHOOSE	141
	Miss L. M. Naylor, Assistant Sunday School Organiser, Diocese of Bristol.	

CHAP.		PAGE
6.	WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO BE? The Rev. A. H. Candler, M.A., formerly Supt. of Education, Northern Territories, Gold Coast.	147
7.	CHRIST'S SOLDIER AND SERVANT The Rev. N. W. Goodacre, M.A.	154
8.	THE WAVES OF INFLUENCE The Rev. C. A. Martin, M.A., formerly Secretary, Young People's Dept., C.M.S.	160
9.	PRIESTS AND PASTORS (EMBERTIDE) The Editor.	166
10.	THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD Miss E. M. Pearson, B.A., Tutor of St. Christopher's College, Blackheath.	173
11.	THE KINGDOM NEAR AT HAND The Rev. J. B. Griffin, M.A., formerly Director London Diocesan Council for Youth.	179
12.	A CHRISTIAN'S HANDS The Rev. Canon F. Paton-Williams.	183
13.	THINKING AND THANKING The Rev. B. P. Robin, B.A., formerly Warden of St. John's College, Brisbane.	188
14.	THE FINEST ARMOUR IN THE WORLD The Rev. E. W. Gedge, M.A., formerly Secretary, Young People's Dept., C.M.S.	195
15.	CAN YOU TELL A SECRET? Miss Phyllis Dent (National Society).	203
16.	"A TEMPLE MEET" The Rev. C. K. Thacker, B.A., Chaplain of Denstone College.	210
17.	HOW SIMON BECAME PETER The Rev. A. R. Browne-Wilkinson, M.A., formerly Principal of St. Christopher's College, Blackheath.	217
18.	GOD'S CARE The Rev. R. W. Crook, B.D.	223
19.	CHARACTER, PRAYER AND PENITENCE The Rev. W. F. J. G. Coles, B.D., formerly Director of Religious Education, Diocese of Oxford.	228

INTRODUCTION

A VOLUME of children's sermons requires a word of explanation, and even of justification. For the children's sermon has gone rather out of fashion in recent years. The reasons for its neglect were in themselves sound. A reaction had set in against anything that could be suspected of "moralising." The need, it was felt, was not to tell children stories about "being good," but to give them the fundamentals of faith which would lead to the Life in Grace. "Teaching" rather than "preaching" was the object of those clergy who cared most about this part of their ministry. That judgment was sound enough, and still holds good.

Further, the growth of the reformed Sunday School did a good deal to displace the "children's sermon." To gather the children into church on certain occasions meant interference with the serial Sunday School programme. It broke things up. And there was the difficulty, also, of trying to say anything from the pulpit that could be understood by a congregation of children of all ages. Those objections, with certain modifications, still stand.

* * * * *

None the less, it looks as though the "children's sermon" is going to have a larger place in the teaching-life of the Church during the next twenty years than it has had in the last. For this two reasons appear.

First, undoubtedly, broadcasting is influencing our life, in its specifically religious aspects, just as it is doing something to shape all other sides of the thinking life of many

people. This is a "listening" age. The wireless has made most of us, if not good listeners, at least tolerant and patient listeners. Multitudes who never heard a sermon have acquired the habit of listening to a religious message, in lecture or sermon, as presented by the wireless. And amongst these multitudes are the children too. Who can estimate the boon conferred by Mr. Appleton with his "Joan and Betty" Bible stories? To come nearer to the purpose of this volume, the Bishop of Bristol, who contributes our opening essay, has taken the children who are within reach of a wireless to church, and in doing so must have done a very great thing for the cause of the Christian Faith. Presented with this opening, he has not, it may be supposed, tried anything which he would claim to be original. Believing in "the children's sermon," he has given us a children's service, with a message delivered from the pulpit to the children before him. There must have been many clergy, like the present writer, who, as they listened, asked themselves, "Isn't there more, perhaps, to be said for the children's sermon than I have been accustomed to suppose?" Nor should mention of the influence of broadcasting omit some reference to the quite different method of the late Canon Percy Dearmer. In his monthly broadcast he gave something of great value for those who had reached the stage of appreciation. He put into practice his belief that you must give simple teaching to educated people and the deeper things of theology to inquiring, and eager, and unspoilt child-minds!

* * * * *

The second reason is to be found in a different sphere of experience. Whether we lament (like the present writer) the minimising of the Church day-school or welcome the passing of our Church children into undenominational influences, it is obvious that much less Church teaching

will be given in many of the elementary schools of the future. It is useless to bemoan this fact without doing something about it. One consequence of the new situation is that the clergy of the future must have a far larger share than did their predecessors in the religious education of their children, if those children are to receive any adequate education. Such education, of course, ought to be the business of the Sunday School, and for that we must work. But, unless our Church can discover new ways of training teachers, and give a new importance to their work, the Sunday School will not, in most places, meet the situation, before the bulk of our children leave the age of childhood. In large towns, and places where there are special opportunities, the Sunday-School teachers will do the work, and the parish priest will just encourage and guide. But in the majority of parishes, in the little towns and the country villages, it will have to be done by the parish priest, if it is going to be done at all.

That it can be done there is little doubt. The writer recalls a family of French children, in a billet near Doullens, during the European War. They had an "anti-clerical" schoolmaster, but they were splendidly instructed in Christian doctrine and morals. On Friday and Saturday nights they would learn a certain portion of a "catechism" for Sunday afternoon, and M. le Curé would round off the "questioning" by what we should call a "children's sermon" addressed to the children of the village. That was all the "religious education" that they had. It was, beyond any fair-minded doubt, very good.

It would be ideal that the vicar of our English village should be able to "grade" his children, and refuse to address an "omnium gatherum." All the educational principles are on his side. But such educational purism, in a village where the 11+ children have been claimed for an undenominational senior school, will merely mean

that his children will grow up, in their formative years, without any understanding of the meaning of such words as "Grace" and "Worship." They will grow up with the belief that the Christian Religion means a knowledge of certain "Bible stories." From such a fate it will be, in the view of many clergy, the duty of the Christian ministry to deliver them.

The children's sermon has its obvious weaknesses. But it does give, to the man who cares for his children and has something ready for them, the opportunity of teaching within the atmosphere of the parish church, and with the authority that the Church and, it may be added, public opinion gives to the word of the ministry.

* * * * *

So it seems, to some of us, that the usefulness of the "children's sermon" is coming into its own again. The sermons which follow have been gathered in that belief, and certain explanations should be made.

To ensure teaching about the greater Christian Festivals, certain sermons on these subjects were invited. But, for the rest, no subject was suggested to contributors. They were asked to contribute a sermon which would show what kind of thing, and in what way, they want to say to their children. In future volumes (if due encouragement is given) we should hope to gather together sermons assigned to the different Sundays of the Christian Year. But on this occasion we have left to our contributors their freedom, and the nett result will show the mind, on this matter, of many clergy who were known, or made known, to us as giving special attention to this part of their ministry.

Such an explanation will make the more significant the large number of writers who chose for their subject the duty of Worship and Prayer. Here, beyond doubt, is our starting-point. Worship is primary in religious

education. If we cannot teach our children to worship and pray, we cannot usefully attempt to teach them anything else. You cannot impose the Christian morality upon a life that is short of the convictions of Worship and Prayer.

* * * * *

Two further explanations should be given.

Readers will undoubtedly welcome the contributions made in this volume by members of the College of St. Christopher, Blackheath, who give us a "lay-woman's" conception of what the children need. They are, by the nature of their training and work, in especially close touch with the needs of children, and it is a privilege to gather within our pages their experience and ideals.

The second point concerns the length of the "sermons." Many, or at least some, of them would require twenty to twenty-five minutes, if they were to be preached *in extenso*. We have not visualised such a "trial by ordeal" of the children. Our contributors have given full measure, believing that those who open these pages, after a busy week, looking for something which they can give to their children, may be glad to have too much rather than too little.

J. R. L.

ON TALKING TO CHILDREN

THE BISHOP OF BRISTOL

THE Editor of this volume has invited me to write an introductory chapter on the subject of talking to children. I find myself at a great disadvantage in trying to do what he asks. No one can really deal with the subject who has not had the opportunity of studying the varying styles and methods adopted by different people in carrying out this special department of Church work. That opportunity, solely through my own fault, I have never had. For a good many years now I have been selfish enough to make the Children's Service, in the parishes which I have served, my own domain, with the result that it is very rarely indeed that I have heard anyone else preach a children's sermon. What I have to say is, therefore, merely the product of my own inner consciousness, and for that reason of far less value than if I had a wider experience to draw upon.

* * * * *

Let me begin by saying something about Children's Services in general, and trying to explain why I think it of such paramount importance that they should, if it is at all possible, be part of the regular Sunday programme of every parish.

The Children's Service seems to me to do two things which it is exceedingly difficult for the most efficient Sunday School to effect.

In the first place, it trains the children in Worship. I know what admirable efforts are being made to-day to

make the opening and closing prayers in very many Sunday Schools a real act of Worship. But children are very susceptible to atmosphere, and I do not think that you can expect to get the ideal atmosphere in a building which is normally used as a day-school or as a meeting-place for clubs and all the weekday organisations of the parish. Only the church, which is set apart for the one purpose, can adequately provide it.

And, in the second place, I believe that the most important part of the religious training of children is to make them feel that they are members of the Christian Fellowship. I myself should regard this as more valuable than actual instruction in the facts and dogmas of the Christian religion. The child who has come to regard himself as a member of the Body is far more likely to hold fast to his religion, in later years, than one who has only learnt certain facts, however well they may have been taught. And for this, too, regular attendance at church seems to be essential. The parish church is the meeting-place of the Christian family, and by going there, Sunday by Sunday, children gain a sense of membership in the family which they are very unlikely to gain merely from attendance at a Sunday School. I do not for one moment wish to depreciate the work of the Sunday School, and I know well how difficult it is in most parishes to fit both Service and School into the Sunday programme; but I do urge that if it is at all possible it should be done. It is abundantly worth while to make the effort required.

* * * * *

It is, however, about the address that I have been asked to write. Let me lay down one absolutely essential rule.

The speaker *must* have the power to attract and keep the attention of his hearers. If, after really trying, he finds himself unable to do so, he had far better hand over the task of talking to the children to someone else. He is

doing more harm than good by his well-meant but futile efforts. He will, fortunately, soon find out whether he can do this or not. Children have neither the politeness nor the consideration for other people's feelings which make so many adult congregations patiently, if somnolently, allow themselves to be bored for twenty minutes every Sunday. I sometimes think that it would do us all good if grown-up people showed what they are really feeling and thinking as unmistakably as children do. It might make us take rather more pains in the preparation of our sermons.

For that is the chief thing required, if we are to speak to the young or to those who are older—that we should take pains. It is, of course, true that speaking to children comes easier to some than to others; but there are very few who could not become reasonably competent if they tried hard enough to learn how to do it.

It is obvious that the first thing we have to do is to get inside the child-mind. We are unlikely to make children think unless, in speaking to them, and still more in preparing to speak, we are ourselves thinking like a child. Is it a heresy to suggest that when St. Paul declared that he had ceased to do so, he proved himself incapable of teaching children? Certainly there are few passages in his epistles which are likely to be intelligible to those who are very young. The surest way of appealing to children in our talks to them is to recapture our own childhood and to remember what we found interesting then. Unfortunately, most of us have become so desperately middle-aged that we are unable to do so, and must fall back on the second-best, which is to make friends with children. We shall never get inside their minds unless we take pains to cultivate their friendship, not in the condescending way of some grown-ups, who are kind to children much as they are kind to cats when they happen to come across them;

that will only result in their shutting themselves up in their shells. We must treat them as though they really mattered—as indeed they do—and regard their friendship as a pearl of great price—as indeed it is. By doing this we shall at least be upon the road which leads to an understanding of their minds and to the ability to make them understand our teaching.

The subject-matter of our addresses is not the thing that matters most. It will naturally vary from time to time. A series of incidents in the life of our Lord, or a selection from His parables, may occupy us for a month or two. At other times we may take some of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity or some of the chief Christian virtues. We ought, if possible, to follow a consecutive line of teaching for some Sundays in succession. To jump from one subject to another, as we often do, can only end in complete mental confusion for the children.

* * * * *

It is, however, the manner of presentation which is of the first importance. Two cooks will take the same ingredients and out of them produce, one an unsavoury and unpalatable mess, the other a dish which tempts the appetite. The same is true of teachers. We must learn to tempt the appetite of those who listen to us.

How shall we do it? First, of course, by being sure that we are intelligible. That ought hardly to need saying, but I am certain that we very often use words which are as familiar as ABC to ourselves, but quite unintelligible to our hearers. I always remember the six-year-old boy who went home after one of my Children's Services in South Kensington and told his mother that Mr. Woodward had been telling them about "Jesus and His twelve bicycles." That is an extreme instance of what I mean, but it shows how careful we ought to be to use only the simplest words and to explain any which may be misunderstood.

But even more important than the language is the general setting of what we have to say, and here—at the risk of being contradicted by those who are experts in education—I maintain that the story form is ideally the best, whatever may be the particular subject which is being dealt with. Incidents in our Lord's life are, of course, stories in themselves, but they are told so tersely in the Gospels that it is legitimate to expand them if in so doing we are scrupulously careful to introduce no detail which is in the slightest degree out of harmony with the New Testament narrative.

My own method, for what it is worth, is to be there myself and see the event, which I am trying to describe, happen before my eyes. That is, I think, the only way in which one can make any story live. To have paid a visit to Palestine and seen the actual places where Jesus lived is, of course, an enormous help. To those who, like myself, have never had that advantage, I commend a careful study of books dealing with the Holy Land, of which an abundant supply is available to-day. I need hardly add that a great deal may be learnt from a comparison of the slightly differing accounts of the various incidents in the four Gospels. No one should attempt to tell a Gospel story until he has made himself familiar with all the versions of it.

The parables are also, of course, "stories," but we do not always tell them as such. There can be no possible danger here in a little expansion. The Sower was a farmer who set out in the morning to one of his outlying fields and perhaps took his little boy with him to scare away the birds. The woman may have just returned from market when she lost the silver coin, and her little daughter helped her search for it until she found it rolled under the couch in the corner of the room. The man who fell among thieves was on his way home from Jerusalem,

where he had gone to sell the produce of his cottage garden. Such touches, which will give new life to old and familiar stories, are surely to be allowed.

When we come to the great articles of the Christian Faith—the Incarnation, the Passion, the Resurrection and the Ascension—and still more to the Christian virtues, there is, I believe, even more justification for bringing imagination to bear upon them. The essential thing, if we can do it, is to make them relevant to life as children know it here and now. *Our chief failure in the teaching of religion to old and young is that we have presented the facts and ideals of Christianity as something which happened or were taught in a far-off age and in a setting which has no relation to our life to-day.* If we are to make them living we must learn to translate them into terms of our own experience, or rather that of the children we are teaching. It is what Bunyan did in *Pilgrim's Progress*, and, though we lack his matchless skill as a story-teller, we shall not make our sermons less effective by taking him as our example.

* * * * *

Let me sum up what I have tried to say by suggesting that, as we sit down to prepare the children's sermon, we should begin by seeing our congregation ranged in front of us and ask ourselves three questions.

First, will this Interest them, will they want to listen? Then, will it be Intelligible, will they understand what I am saying? And lastly, how can I use my Imagination to make the lesson live and stay in their minds, when I have finished speaking? Those are the three "I's" which are indispensable to the teacher of children, and perhaps of grown-ups too. Need I add that we should never begin our preparation or the actual delivery of our address without a prayer for the illumination of the Holy Spirit, Who alone can enable the dullness of our blinded sight and give our teaching life.

I. THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

1. "LOOKING FORWARD" TIME

ADVENT SUNDAY

THE EDITOR

(1) INTRODUCTION

JIMMY is a little boy, nine years old, and not long ago he had a birthday. One of his uncles thought he would give Jimmy a great surprise, and when the birthday morning came, he sent Jimmy a splendid bicycle, which was just what Jimmy had been wanting for ever so long. He didn't let him know that the bicycle was coming, because he wanted it to be a surprise. The uncle thought that all children like a thing better if it comes as a surprise.

I wonder if you do? When Jimmy was in bed that night, and his mother had tucked him up, they had a talk about his birthday. And Mother said what a splendid bicycle it was that the uncle had sent.

"Yes," said Jimmy, "it was super." And then he said something else, which I want you to take special notice of, because I think a lot of you would have said the same. He thought a bit, and then said: "But I wish he'd promised it to me, Mum, months ago, instead of sending it as a surprise. Then I could have looked forward to it."

Jimmy meant that he would have enjoyed the looking forward almost as much as getting it. Day after day he would have been wondering what it was going to be like; he would have been thinking of how he would take it out for the first time and what his friends would say when they saw it.

Aren't we, most of us, like that? We enjoy looking for-

ward to things. We like looking forward to the holiday at the seaside that we are going to have, weeks before it comes. We like looking forward to the present that we are going to get.

(2) "LOOKING FORWARD" TIME

And this season of Advent, that we begin to-day, is just the same. You might call it "looking-forward" time. So this afternoon we are going to think about two things that we can begin to look forward to.

First of all, one of the greatest days in the year is getting very close. Which is it? Yes, Christmas Day; and that is the birthday of the Lord Jesus. I am sure that we all look forward to birthdays at home; not only our own birthday, but other people's, and especially Mother's.

What do you begin to do, as you look forward to Mother's birthday? Let us see if we can think of all the things that we do. I should think there are two, aren't there? First of all, we rack our brains to think what she would like for a birthday present. Perhaps we ask her a few questions, without letting her guess why we are asking; and, if we can't find out that way, we ask Daddy if he will keep a secret and tell us what *he* thinks she would like. And perhaps we discuss it among ourselves, we brothers and sisters. It takes a long time to make up our minds just what she would like best. But we know that you can't do these things in a hurry.

At last we are quite certain what we are going to give her this year. But that isn't all. Where is the money coming from?

We look in our money-boxes, and there is never quite as much as we want. So we have to start and save in real earnest. It means going without sweets, very likely, and not going so often to the pictures. But it is worth it,

when the birthday comes, to be ready with something that has cost us a bit of saving.

And then comes the last, and best, part, when we give our present on her birthday morning, and we are glad that we did all the thinking and saving, because we have given her a present, which we can see that she really likes.

(3) PRESENTS FOR THE LORD JESUS

This Advent Sunday I want us to begin to think and save, just in the same way as we do for Mother's birthday, because an even greater birthday is coming on Christmas Day. That is what the word “Advent” means—or at least one of its meanings. It is an old Latin word, like so many of our Church words, which just means “coming.” So we are all thinking to-day of Jesus coming into His world, as a baby, born of the Virgin Mary, on that first Christmas Day. And it also means something else, which I shall tell you at the very end.

Now let us look forward to the birthday of our Lord, just as we look forward to Mother's, and see what we can do about it.

Of course, we must give Him a present, mustn't we? We shall get presents ourselves for Christmas, and it would be very mean if we let Christmas be all getting and no giving, don't you think? But what shall we give Him? What do you think He would like? I am going to suggest two things. He would like something for Himself, and something for other people. And I believe we can all give Him what He wants.

“Something for Himself.” What shall that be? Think of those shepherds, standing or kneeling beside the Crib at Bethlehem. What had they to give? There was nothing in their hands, partly because they were poor men, and partly because they hadn't had any time to get

ready. But there was, inside them, the best gift of all. They were worshipping Him with loving hearts.

So let us give our Lord the same present too, all for Himself, on Christmas morning. We will come to church in the morning, and give Him the best worship that we possibly can. I say "the best that we possibly can," because sometimes we don't do our very best when we come to church, do we? Perhaps we are a bit tired, or thinking about other things, and we don't put our whole hearts into the prayers and praises. But on Christmas morning we are going to give our very, very best. As we walk to church, we will try to imagine that we are the shepherds, long ago, who said, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem" (St. Luke ii. 15), and, when we are inside the church, we will think of our prayers and praises as being the first part of our Christmas present to the Lord Jesus.

(4) SOMETHING FOR OTHERS

Now let us plan the other part of our present.

Perhaps you will say, "Why won't one present be enough for our Lord, just as it is for Mother?" That is a good question. Let us make sure that we remember the answer. Do you recall that time when someone asked our Lord how he could really do what God wants? Jesus told him that there were two things he must do. He must love God. That was the first part. He must love his neighbour. That was the second part. It is always the same, when we are trying to please our Lord. We must give Him something for His own, and something for our neighbour. It wouldn't be any good giving everything to Him, and not bothering about the other people in the world we live in.

We know that He wants us to do that because He once told His followers all about it.

He spoke about being hungry, thirsty, without clothes and ill, and how certain men had given Him food, drink, clothes and kindness. Those who were listening couldn't understand, because they couldn't remember any times when He had been like that. And so they asked Him when they had ever given food or drink. Then He explained. Those who give things to His children—grown-up children or quite little children—are really giving them to Him. "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me" (St. Matthew xxv. 40).

That isn't hard to understand, is it? Suppose anyone did something to help you or please you, your mother would be just as grateful as if they had done it to her. She would say: "Doing a kind thing like that for one of my children is really just the same as doing it to me, and that is why I am so grateful." Now, although Mother loves her children ever so much, and more than we can understand until we are grown up, our Lord loves His children far more than any mother can. And that shows us how much we can please Him, whenever we can do anything for any of His children, here at home or over the seas.

Therefore we can be quite sure that this Christmas, whatever we give to the children whom He loves we shall really be giving to Him, as the second part of our Christmas present to Him. Now, what shall we plan?

I am going to make a suggestion to you, and you must see what you think of it. The other day I was in the Infirmary, seeing one of our own children who was there in bed. There were thirty-nine other beds. Forty altogether. And, after I had left him, I had a talk with the sister of the ward, and what do you think she was doing? She was planning Christmas for all the children who will be in bed on Christmas Day. She is going to give them a

Christmas Tree, and presents, too, as well; and she is hoping that people who are well, and at home for their Christmas, will send her money, and things, so that she can give those children a happy day.

And, as I talked to her, I had an idea. Here it is.

We all come to this church for children's service every Sunday afternoon. Why shouldn't we save up our pennies for four weeks to give presents to those children? Then we can have a special collection on the Sunday before Christmas, and send all the money along to sister? What do you think?

It would be a real Christmas present to our Lord, just as much as our Christmas worship. Those pennies that we save and give to the children in the Infirmary, will be pennies given to Him. And when, on Christmas morning, we think of those children with their toys, and how pleased they are, we shall be able to think that we have pleased Him too.

So there are our two presents for Christmas Day. Worship for Him, the very best worship we can give, in His church; and, in the Infirmary, our presents to His children.

(5) CONCLUSION

I said that there was another meaning of the word "Advent" that I would tell you before we finished.

Long ago, when Christians first began to think about all that our Lord had taught them, they thought of the time when there would be no more sin and badness in the world, and men would be really happy, because Christ was their King. That, you know, is what we ourselves mean, when we say the part in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come." And at Advent, they thought of the coming of Christ's kingdom of love and peace. And they thought of how they could bring it to the world, so

that he would really be King. Well, I think what we have planned for Christmas Day is really what they meant, don't you?

We are going to try to love and worship Him a little more than we have done; and we are going to try to serve His children. And it is by acts of worship and love, like these, that we can all, whether we are grown up or not, bring His kingdom nearer.

2. THE BOY WHO MISSED CHRISTMAS

A STORY FOR CHRISTMAS DAY

ELEANOR MARTIN

(1) INTRODUCTION

SOME people are unfortunately rather good at missing things. I once knew a little girl who was taken to wait outside Buckingham Palace to see the King drive by. Just as the royal car left the palace gates the little girl sneezed and sneezed! She never saw the King.

But you would not think anyone could miss Christmas, would you? The shops, the calendars, the church, the postman, they all tell us Christmas is here, and we are all eager to enjoy Christmas. Do you think it's possible for anybody to miss Christmas? And what would missing Christmas mean? Would it mean having no presents? Or giving no presents? Or not going to church? Or . . . *what* would it mean?

I'm going to tell you a Christmas-time story now that should help you to answer those questions.

(2) A HAPPY CHRISTMAS

Once upon a time, but not long ago in history or far away from here, there lived a boy who had had as happy a Christmas as any of you. You can easily make a picture of this boy in your own mind, because he spoke your language, wore your kind of clothes, lived in the same sort of house as you and was about your age.

He liked Christmas as much as you do: it was the

favourite day in the year with him, better even than his birthday. He liked getting presents—everyone does, I think—and this year he had been given just what he wanted: a bicycle and a decent paint-box—one with tubes of water-colour in it—and a new sketch-book for painting in. He had been given several new books, just the very ones he wanted. (I'll leave you to imagine what their names would be.) He had also had sweets enough to make the day seem different from any ordinary day.

And this boy—also like you, I expect—liked to give as well as to get presents, and he was especially happy this year, because he had given some very nice presents, and the people he gave them to were pleased with them. He had made a pipe-rack for his father, and a little box for his mother to keep her cotton-reels in, and he had given one or two of his best last year's toys to the Christmas tree at the hospital. Altogether he had that nice warm feeling in his heart which comes from people being kind to you and you being kind to people.

He had had a busy day, too. (Do you find Christmas a busy day?) He woke early in the dark, and had a stocking full of presents to dive into. He had dressed and gone out to try his new bike. Then there was the bustle of breakfast and letters and getting off to church. In church he was excited by the Christmas decorations and the Christmas hymns, which he loved singing at the top of his voice. Then there was the walk home, and the Christmas dinner, and trying his new paint-box, and dipping into his new books, and his new sweets.

So by four o'clock, when it was beginning to get dark outside, the boy was beginning to feel a bit sleepy. It got too dark to read, and he could not be bothered to get up and turn on the light. He sat on the floor and gazed at the bright coals at the bottom of the fire. As he gazed, some words came into his mind that he had heard in

church that morning: "We beheld his glory." His glory . . . the words and the glowing coals were mixed together, in one brightness in his mind, and the boy fell asleep.

(3) THE MISSED CHRISTMAS

And suddenly it seemed to him to be very cold all about him, though the fire still blazed at his feet. He rubbed his eyes and looked up—it was dark, though not so dark as it had been, because the night sky over his head was faintly sprinkled with stars. Looking up at them, he discovered that he was not in a room any longer, but out on a hillside in the night. He could feel the stony, sandy soil under his feet and see the short grass and the bodies of sleeping sheep in the ring of firelight around him. In front of him the shepherds' fire threw up a blaze of bright sparks, as a boy, of about his own age, stepped forward from the shadows beyond and piled an armful of wood on the glowing embers.

"A happy Christmas," said the boy to the shepherd boy. "Have you had a good day, too?"

"Peace be with you," said the shepherd boy. "It wasn't the day so much as last night that was lovely for me."

"What happened last night?" asked the boy in his dream.

"Ah! last night I saw a glory—here, in these fields."

"*And we beheld his glory* : I heard about that in church," said the boy. "Was that the glory that *you* saw?"

"It was the glory of heaven I saw," answered the young shepherd.

"Tell me about it," said the boy.

And the shepherd boy said: "Last night I woke up from my sleep—for it wasn't my turn to watch the fire as it is

to-night—and I saw the sky as bright as day and the glory of the Lord shining round about us. There was a voice like silver rivers speaking of a baby, but I didn't quite hear what was said. And suddenly I saw a multitude of angels, just as in a picture, tall and grand and fiery, with wings stretched up to heaven and feet stretched down to earth; and the angels sang most beautifully. They sang praise to God."

"*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men,*" said the boy, for he had learnt that at school; and, besides, he had heard it in church that very morning. "And did you go and see the Holy Baby?" he asked the shepherd boy.

"Go? *I didn't go anywhere.* I didn't know what they were talking about; but I liked hearing the angels' song, so when the angels had gone away I lay down by the fire again and shut my eyes tightly, so that I could think they were still there, and I went to sleep and dreamed I heard them singing."

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear! And didn't *you* go to Bethlehem with the other shepherds? And didn't *you* see the Holy Child? Then you've *missed* the real Christmas," cried the boy piteously.

"No, I went nowhere. I saw no one," said the young shepherd. "Did you?"

"Did you? Did you? Did you?"

The boy stirred in his sleep with these words ringing in his ears. Presently he nodded and woke up. It wasn't a shepherds' fire under the stars that he sat beside any longer, but a fire in a barred grate at home.

He jumped up suddenly, feeling that something sad had happened, though all around him were his Christmas toys.

"What is it? What is it?" he said to himself. "Oh! now I remember. That young shepherd. He heard the

angels, but he never went to Bethlehem. Oh, poor boy, poor boy! He *missed* the whole thing." And then the boy remembered the words that had been ringing in his ears when he woke: "Did you? Did you? Did you?"

He sat down on the floor again to think. Had he missed Christmas, too? He had had a very happy day, and made his father and mother happy as well, but had he been to Bethlehem? Had he seen the Holy Child?

"How can a person go to Bethlehem when he lives here and nowadays?" he thought. "And how can we see Jesus too?"

(4) CONCLUSION

I wonder if you could have answered him? Could you have told him how nowadays, "as of old in Bethlehem," we need not miss the real joy of Christmas—we can see Jesus too?

I think, if you had known that boy, you would have been able to tell if he'd been asleep all Christmas Day with the young shepherd, or if he'd really been to Bethlehem to see Jesus as the shepherds in the Bible did.

If his heart was glad when he sang his hymns in church, not because he had been given a new bicycle, and not because he liked singing hymns, but because God was there and because God has given us Jesus to be our Friend for life and afterwards, then he had been to Bethlehem, I think.

And if his heart was gentle when he came out of church, friendly to the younger children, gentle to his parents and all he met, because Jesus is a Friend to all, then I think he had seen the Holy Child.

If, when he went to bed that night, he could really say, as he thanked God for his happy Christmas: "The best present of all is that Jesus has come to live on earth and

be our Friend," then I think he knew the real Christmas joy.

If all these things had happened in the boy's heart—the praising, the love and the joy—I know he had been to Bethlehem. I know he did not miss seeing the Holy Child on Christmas Day.

3. HOW TO USE LENT

(QUINQUAGESIMA)

C. R. NEWBY

(1) INTRODUCTION

Now we have come to the third of the Sundays with the very long names, which seem so difficult and hard to remember, until one realises that the name is just the Latin word for a number.

Quinquagesima means fiftieth; it is given to the Sunday because, like the two preceding ones, it points our thoughts forward to the greatest of all the days of the Christian year, Easter Day. To-day is about the fiftieth day before Easter Day. This Sunday is sometimes called by a name you will not find in the Prayer Book; we may think of it perhaps as the Sunday's nickname. Do you not find it makes us feel more friendly to a person when we can call him by a nickname? I hope this Sunday's nickname may make you feel friendly to it. It is called LOVE SUNDAY. Do you know why? Let us all look at the Collect for the day. Is the word "love" in it? No? But there is the word "Charity," a form of the beautiful Latin word *caritas*, which means the very best kind of love—the kind that does not just mean feeling all sorts of tender and perhaps rather sentimental feelings that lead us nowhere, but the kind that is strong and unselfish, and makes people want to help forward God's work, and to help others to be good and happy.

The older ones of you may like to read to yourselves the Epistle when you go home. Look now from where the passage is taken. There St. Paul says what kind of a person

he has in mind when he thinks of one who has *caritas*. But, of course, the very best way of finding out what Love is, is to look at Jesus Christ, the things He did, and the words He used, day by day all through those years He lived here on earth, showing us what God the Father who is perfect Love, is like.

Do you remember the episode in the *Water Babies*, when Tom the chimney-sweep found himself in the beautiful room with the pure white walls, and the white furniture, and the white sheets and curtains, and the lovely little girl in bed with the clean white skin and hair like bright golden threads? Catching sight of himself in the long mirror, he saw—what he had not properly realised before—how dreadfully black he was, and a great desire grew up in him to be clean. “Certainly I should look much prettier then if I grew at all like her.” Notice the word in his sentence—*grew*. The story of Tom is like a parable of our life.

When we look at ourselves, when we are in the presence of the pure love of Jesus Christ, we want to *grow* like Him. To grow does not mean *suddenly to be*, it means *gradually to become*; only things which have life can grow, like plants and animals and boys and girls. Boys and girls have two kinds of life: natural life, given at the very start; and spiritual life given at Baptism, in a very special way, so that they become in a special sense children of God.

(2) GROWING TIME

Next Wednesday is Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. The word Lent means spring, the time when the days lengthen out. Spring makes us think of growth. It is going on all around us; watch the buds and the lambs. Now put together the two ideas: (i) that of love or *Caritas*, and (ii) Lent as a growing time; and we have found a meaning and purpose for the forty days between Ash Wednesday and Easter Day. It is the time for growing more like Jesus

Christ in the matter of love, and that means a lot of hard and patient scrubbing away of the things which make us black and sooty, like disobedience or unkindness or telling untruths. Will you try to think what special bit of soot might be scrubbed away this Lent?

Growing seedlings need sticks—sweet-peas, for instance. The stick is to help them to grow straight. The sticks we need are called self-discipline. I will suggest two sticks which might be put in this Lent, to help us to grow.

One is the stick of unselfish acts. Think, perhaps, of saving some of your pocket-money to buy something for someone who needs it badly. There are plenty of people needing help to-day. [Cite some definite needs appropriate to the children.] The other stick is a very tall one, and will help you to grow right up to God; it is the stick of prayer. Why not, besides being very strict about your daily prayers, add one special extra one for Lent? I know if you do that you will feel cleaner, taller and straighter on Easter Day.

Here is one, I will read it *once*; then you try to say it *with* me; then you will try to say it altogether *without* me; then you will see if you can *write it down* in your notebook; then I will read it and you can correct what you have written. On each Sunday in Lent we will say it together, and I hope that many of you will say it daily at home. Here it is:—

“O holy, loving Jesus
Who on the Cross didst die for me,
Fill my heart with love for Thee.
Help me this Lent to grow to love Thee more,
And to grow more loving to Thy other children,
That I may give Thee joy
By glad obedience to Thy will. Amen.” *

* Adapted from *The Lord our Brother*, Sedding, S.P.C.K. and S.S.I.

(3) GOD'S GRACE

Just one more thought before we end.

I called the sticks self-discipline. That means that each self has to try very hard to grow like Jesus during this special time. But do not make any mistake about it. You cannot do it all by yourself, nor are you left to do it alone. God will give you His power, working in you, if you ask Him. Do you remember the words in the Catechism, "by God's *grace* so I will"? Here is the idea in a verse which you will be able to repeat, most of you, after I have said it only once.

"I am a child of God
I ought to do His Will:
I can do what He tells me to;
And by His Grace I will." *

Say that verse on Ash Wednesday. It will give you a splendid send-off in any scrubbing or putting in of sticks you may have planned. Now shall we kneel down and say together the prayer we have just learnt?

* From *Grace and Grit*, Downton. S.P.C.K.

4. YOUR PALM CROSS

A SERMON FOR PALM SUNDAY

A. E. O. ANDERSON

Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord ; Hosanna in the highest.—St. Matthew xxi. 9.

(1) INTRODUCTION

I WANT you to pretend you are on a magic carpet which will go to any place you wish to see, and at any time. To-day we have all wished to go to Palestine and the Holy Land—as it was about two thousand years ago.

Joseph ben Ezra was a young lad of fourteen years of age living in Jerusalem at this time. Just now he was very excited, because it was nearing the Feast of the Passover, when Jews came in from all the country round to keep the Feast in the Temple, and he was looking forward to meeting again some of the boy friends he met last year at the Festival.

He was hoping to see the new teacher Jesus, the Nazarene, whom he had heard tales of and yet had not met.

(2) THE BOY WITH THE BASKET

A boy friend of Joseph ben Ezra's told him that he went out to see Jesus in the country once, some time ago, when a crowd of other people were going ; and they had listened to Jesus teaching till it got quite late, not thinking about the time, or meals, or anything else, they were all so interested in what Jesus was saying. Towards the end of the day the people began to feel hungry, and there was no food to be had because they were so far away from the towns. But

Joseph's boy friend had taken some lunch with him in a satchel, and he found one of the disciples of the Teacher Jesus and offered him his lunch to give to Jesus, as he had enjoyed listening so much and wanted to say "Thank you" in some way. The Teacher Jesus accepted the gift, but He did not eat it Himself. He asked a blessing from God, and then shared it amongst the people round. As the disciples handed it round to the crowd, they kept coming back for more, and still there was some left, after the whole crowd of about five thousand people had eaten a meal. So Joseph's friend had told him.

(3) WHAT JOSEPH SAW

Joseph wanted to see Jesus very much. He heard that He was staying in Bethany (just about two miles out of Jerusalem) for the Passover, and was coming in each day. So Joseph was out early this morning watching by the side of the road from Bethany.

Other people too knew the Teacher Jesus was near. They had come out to see Him, so that the roadside was lined with crowds of people watching, just as if a king was coming. Some people said Jesus *was* the Messiah, whom the Jews expected to come soon. But Joseph did not know, and he wanted to see for himself.

Presently, as the crowd watched and waited, the word was passed along that Jesus was coming with His friends, and the crowd got very excited—so much so that Joseph climbed up a tree, so that he could see more clearly.

(4) IN THE PALM TREE

A little cloud of dust in the distance showed where the people were, and soon the tramping of feet was heard. It seemed to Joseph that a lot of people were coming, and, as they drew nearer, he could hear a sound of shouting—

“Hosanna! hosanna!” Gradually the procession of people came nearer, and Joseph saw men, women and children coming along, waving palm leaves and branches of trees, and in the middle of them—surrounded by His disciples, was the Teacher Jesus, sitting on a donkey, on which they had put cloaks for a saddle for Him.

As they came along, the people on either side of the road took off *their* cloaks and spread them on the sandy roadway for a path for Jesus to ride over, and Joseph ben Ezra pulled branches from the tree he was in and threw them down below for the children standing near, and they waved them like flags and shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the Highest!”

Everybody shouted, and Joseph from the tree shouted too as the procession came along the road underneath him. As it passed, the people, who had been lining the road, joined the procession, still cheering and praising God for the wonderful Teacher. Joseph hurriedly climbed down and joined in too all the way back to Jerusalem—through the gates—up the steep hill—to the steps of the Temple. There the crowd parted, and Jesus got down, and, followed by His disciples, went into the Temple.

Joseph was so excited that he ran nearly all the way home to tell his mother, and it was not till he got in the house that he realised he still carried a palm-leaf in his hand. So he put it in his own room and kept it as a reminder of the wonderful man Jesus whom he had seen for the first time on that day.

(5) YOUR PALM CROSS

Now I want you to do the same thing with your palm—which you have received. If you have a special prayer-corner at home, put it there. But, if not, perhaps Mother

will let you pin it with a drawing-pin, on the wall, above your bed, so that you see it when you get up and when you go to bed, and it will remind you to say your prayers, and to think of the boy who wanted to see Jesus and cheer for Him.

5. THE COURAGE OF JESUS

GOOD FRIDAY

H. CAIGER

(1) INTRODUCTION

GOOD FRIDAY is a sad day, for it is the day on which we think of the death of Jesus Christ.

If someone asked us, "Why did Jesus come to this world?" what should we say?

I think we might say that He came to do three things.

First, He came to make it possible for us to live again after death; to have what the Apostles' Creed calls "the life everlasting." Jesus said, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life" (St. John iii. 36). That is a clear promise, which shows that no true Christian need be afraid of death. In His own way, and in His own time, Jesus will raise the dead to life again.

Secondly, He came to show us how to lead good lives, so that we should be worthy of everlasting life. Those who want God to preserve them must try to become worth preserving. You will remember that Jesus compared the people of the world to a corn-field. If we look at a corn-field just before harvest-time, we shall see that it is not all good corn. Here and there weeds are mingled with the corn. It was the same with the corn-fields of Palestine, where our Lord lived. The corn in the fields was mixed with weeds, or "tares," as they are called in the Bible. Jesus likened good people to the good corn, and bad people to the tares. Just as the farmer gathers up

the good corn at harvest-time, but leaves the tares, so would it be at the end of the world. The end of the world would be God's harvest-time. He would send His angels to gather the righteous into His kingdom, but the wicked would be left out (St. Matthew xiii. 24-30).

Jesus came to show us how to lead good lives, so that we should be like the corn, and not the weeds.

But we said Jesus came to do *three* things. The first was to make it possible for us to have everlasting life. The second was to show us how to become *worthy* of everlasting life. What was the third?

The third thing He came to do was to show us that to be good we must be *brave*. The more you think that over, the more true you will find it.

(2) THE MORAL COURAGE OF JESUS

Jesus Christ was very brave. We often think of the patience of Jesus, and of the kindness of Jesus; but perhaps we do not think nearly enough of His tremendous courage.

There are two sorts of courage. One is what we call *moral courage*. That is the kind of courage we need in order to speak the truth, or to do the right thing, when we know that by doing so we may get ourselves laughed at, or sneered at, or disliked.

Jesus had great moral courage. He used to spend much of His time travelling about the Holy Land, preaching to the people and healing the sick. The poorer folk loved Him dearly, and large crowds would often follow Him, especially if they thought He was going to preach. Now, some of the Jews, called Pharisees, believed themselves to be very important, and they liked to meet with respect and admiration wherever they went. When they saw the crowds following Jesus growing larger and larger, they

became very jealous of Him. The more popular Jesus became, the more angry and spiteful grew the Pharisees. At length they began, as jealous people will, to seek for an opportunity for getting Him into trouble.

Now, the Jews believed that it was very wrong to do any sort of work on the Sabbath Day. One Sabbath, when Jesus was in a synagogue, or local church, a man with a withered hand happened to be in the congregation. The Pharisees watched Jesus carefully, to see whether He would heal him. If He did, they intended to accuse Him of breaking the Sabbath, on the ground that healing the sick on the Sabbath was as bad as working on it. They hoped in this way to bring Jesus into disgrace, and perhaps cause the people to turn against Him.

Jesus knew quite well that everyone in the synagogue was watching Him, and that the Pharisees could be very dangerous enemies. But He was not in the least afraid. He knew that our heavenly Father wants everyone to be well and happy, and that it must be right to heal anyone who is ill, even on the Sabbath, for "the better the day, the better the deed."

So Jesus said to the man with the withered hand, "Stand forth," and turning to the Pharisees, He asked, "Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?" Then, even as they watched Him, He healed the man with the withered hand (St. Mark iii. 1-6).

The Pharisees have been described as the most powerful, vindictive and unscrupulous party in the Holy Land, and it must have taken a lot of moral courage to stand up to them as Jesus did. He was never afraid to tell them to their faces exactly what He thought of them, and He was never afraid to do what He believed to be right, whether the Pharisees liked it or not.

(3) THE PHYSICAL COURAGE OF JESUS

The other kind of courage is *physical courage*. We show physical courage when we are not afraid of pain.

No one ever had more physical courage than Jesus. He never allowed hunger, thirst or pain of any kind to hinder Him from doing what He thought He ought to do, and on Good Friday, long ago, He endured great agony, and suffered one of the cruellest deaths known to mankind.

This is how it came about.

After a while the enemies of Jesus were so full of hatred and jealousy that they wanted Him to be put to death, so they plotted among themselves to accuse Him of blasphemy. Blasphemy means "speaking against God," and the Jews looked upon it as a very serious crime, which was punishable by death. They knew that it would not be difficult for them to capture Jesus when they wanted to, for one of our Lord's own disciples had turned traitor, and was acting as a spy. This traitor's name was Judas Iscariot.

One dark Thursday night, which we now call "Maundy Thursday," Jesus went with His disciples to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane. Judas slipped away and told His enemies, and they rushed into the garden, armed with swords and sticks, and seized Jesus.

The next day, Friday, they brought Jesus before the Judge, whose name was Pontius Pilate, and told him that Jesus was a very wicked man, who ought to be condemned to death. Pilate guessed that they were only accusing Him through envy, and asked, "What evil hath he done?" But the Jews only cried, "Crucify Him!" Then Pilate thought he would appeal to their pity, so he ordered Jesus to be scourged. A scourge was a whip, having a short handle, and several leather thongs, with a piece of bone or lead fixed at the end of each. To be scourged

caused such terrible agony that hardened criminals sometimes died under it. To add to our Lord's pain, they made a crown of thorns, and then beat Him over the head, to drive the sharp spines into His flesh. But they could not break His spirit. We have every reason to believe that He did not even cry out.

Then Pilate brought Jesus before the people again. Our Lord's back was raw from the scourging, and the blood was streaming down His face from the wounds made by the crown of thorns. Pilate said, "Behold the man!" He hoped that when they saw Jesus, they would take pity on Him, and let Him go. But they continued to cry, "Crucify Him!" Even then, Pilate would have set Jesus free, had not someone called out, "Thou art not Cæsar's friend if thou let this man go!" That frightened Pilate. He was a bad-tempered man, who had caused much trouble among the people over whom he ruled, and several complaints had been made about him to the Roman Emperor, or Cæsar. When Pilate heard that cry, he took it as a hint that if he let Jesus go, they would complain to the Emperor again. Pilate knew that another complaint would mean serious trouble for him, so he gave way, and told the Jews that they could take Jesus away and crucify Him.

(4) THE CRUCIFIXION

To crucify means to nail on a cross. Crucifixion was a horrible way they had in ancient days of putting people to death. The cross was a wooden pole about nine feet high, to which was fixed a cross-piece about four feet long. The condemned man was laid on the cross, with his arms open, and fixed to it by a nail through each hand. The feet were placed close together, and a nail driven through each foot. Sometimes the feet were crossed, and one big

nail driven through both. The cross was then set upright in the ground, and the man left to hang there until he was dead.

The condemned man was expected to carry his own cross to the place of crucifixion, but Jesus, weakened through loss of blood, was unable to carry His. So they compelled a passer-by called Simon, who came from Cyrene, in North Africa, to carry it for Him.

His cross was set up on a hill outside the walls of Jerusalem, called "Golgotha," which means "the place of a skull." It is thought that the hill was called by that name because it was of a round shape, like a human skull. This is the "green hill" in the well-known hymn,

"There is a green hill far away
Without a city wall."

They crucified Jesus at nine o'clock on Good Friday morning, and He died at three o'clock in the afternoon. Together with Jesus were crucified two thieves, their crosses being placed one on either side of His.

It was a custom for kind-hearted people, when they knew someone was going to be crucified, to bring wine mixed with a drug called myrrh. They would give this drugged wine to the man on the cross, so that it would deaden his pain. The drug was offered to Jesus, but as soon as He tasted it, and knew what it was, He refused to drink it. No doubt this was partly because He wanted to remain conscious as long as possible, so that He could talk to His friends standing round the cross, and we know that He did speak to them several times. But partly, too, I think, because He wanted us to know that there was no pain that we might be called upon to bear greater than the pain that He Himself had borne, and borne triumphantly.

Isaiah prophesied that the Saviour would be a "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah liii. 3). We

know that He was a Man of courage, too. Even as the Roman soldiers drove the nails through His hands—and think how it must have hurt!—He gave no cry of pain. He did not even have to press His lips together very tightly. He actually had the courage and self-control to say a prayer for them! He said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (St. Luke xxiii. 34), and He died triumphantly commending Himself to the Father, for His last words were, “Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.”

That is the sort of courage we want. The courage to say and do what we know to be right. The courage to be true to God and to our better self.

6. THE NEW LIFE

EASTER-DAY

C. E. JARMAN

The Lord is risen indeed.—St. Luke xxiv. 34.

(1) INTRODUCTION

THAT is exactly what the Christian Church bids us believe to-day. Jesus Christ is really risen from the dead, and is alive for evermore. That is the meaning of Easter to us all, and because it means this we are glad and rejoice: we are to lift up our hearts in praise to God and remember that our Lord is King. He has won the victory over sin and death, and because He lives we can live also with His grace within our souls.

What a wonderful day Easter is! So that you can see how true this is, first look around this church. Everybody has been very busy here. Good Friday was a sad day, and we thought of Jesus and His Cross. We tried to picture to ourselves our Saviour dying on the Cross; offering His Life as a sacrifice to take away the sin of the world. In a very heroic way He endured His suffering to the end—to make us good; and goodness never comes easily to people. He died, and loving hands took down His body and laid it in a tomb in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea.

Because we remembered that, we took from the church many things we ordinarily see there, and made this house look bare, for we were sad. We wanted to be sorry for all the cruelty our Saviour had to endure. Over the

evening of Good Friday and Holy Saturday there hung a silence—the silence of His sorrowing Church. Then the scene changed. “Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” The spirit of Easter took possession of God’s people here. We began to feel we must prepare for the joyful news that “Christ is risen.” “On the third day He rose again”: that is what the Creed says, and the third day will soon be here; so we felt. Now look around at what you can see. The church (our own, and others everywhere) is decked with flowers: beautiful lilies, spring flowers in abundance adorn the sanctuary and entwine the font. Gorgeous colours adorn the chancel. The treasures of the church are recovered, brought out for holy use, and all has been made ready. Everywhere, too, faith is rekindled, faith is awakened, faith is kept alive, faith is recovered. “He is risen again” according to the Scriptures. The note of Easter is struck, and we are glad, like the first disciples.

It is for you, children of the Church, to open your hearts, that the same Lord Jesus may come to you and give you His Easter blessing. The great joy of Easter for everyone is in Easter Communion. Some of you have known that already: we pray that all will in a few years; but if that is not for the moment your privilege, imagine the Risen Lord with us here, standing amongst us in His risen power, and let us offer to Him the loyalty of our life and the love of our heart.

The coming of Easter is like the dawning of a new day. To see the sunrise is a wonderful sight. Have you seen this for yourself? I wonder if it would help you if I quoted some verses I myself love. They occur in one of our great poems, entitled “In Memoriam”—the lines were written by Tennyson. The whole poem (it is a long one) was to the memory of a friend. In this he describes the return of day after the darkness of the night. With

great skill he depicts a night scene with its unearthly stillness; hour after hour goes by and then,

Sucked from out the distant gloom
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume.

And gathering freshlier overhead,
Rocked the full foliaged elms, and swung
The heavy folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said

"The dawn, the dawn," and died away;
And East and West, without a breath,
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day.

Is not that like the spirit of Easter? A gentle breeze of faith and love gathers strength, till everything is rocked and swung and flung, and one great burst of praise hails the Day. The dawn has come. Christ is risen. Then to the eyes of faith everything "broadens into boundless day."

(2) WHAT HAPPENED ON THE THIRD DAY

So far I have tried to help you to look around and see what Easter means. But there is more to do than that. We must go directly to the Scriptures and read again the story of the Resurrection: we must get the picture into our minds and ponder over it. What did really happen on the morning of the third day?

Wasn't it this? Mary Magdalene, with other women, went to the sepulchre and found the stone rolled away. They were not prepared for this, so at first they were perplexed and afraid. Who has taken away the body, for the tomb is empty? The question was answered almost before it was asked. Angels were guarding the place, and they said to the women, "He is not here, He is risen; remember how He spake unto you" . . . and

they remembered. But they were still full of fear, and ran to Simon Peter and told him what they had seen.

The story is graphically told. Peter takes John with him and they hurry to the grave, stoop down and look in. What do they see? The linen clothes lying, and the napkin wrapped together in a place by itself. They believe He must have risen; yes, it is true! Then they go home, but Mary stays in the garden; she is still afraid and weeps, but the angels are there to console her. "Woman, why weepest thou?" they say. "Because they have taken away my Lord," she murmurs in reply. Now we get to a very beautiful part of the story. Mary sees Someone standing near; it was Jesus Himself, but she did not know it. He, too, said to her, "Why weepest thou?" Almost in desperation she said, thinking it was the gardener who spoke, "Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take him away." You remember the sequel. Jesus said to her "Mary" . . . she knew now who it was. "Master," is all she could say, and she cast herself down before Him.

So the day wears on, and we are told of others who saw the risen Lord. He walks to Emmaus with Cleopas and his companion, and there in the village house shows them Himself. They hurry back to Jerusalem, and by this time the glorious news is circulating round. Every moment faith is gaining ground, until in the upper room, when the doors are shut, Jesus stands in the midst before His disciples, with only Thomas absent, and says "Peace be unto you." Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. It is a wonderful story, and credible in every detail. "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way?" says Cleopas to his friend. We can well believe that to be so.

Do we know how He rose? That is a question we may like to ask. No, that is not told us. We do know that it

was by the power of God. The sacred body of the Lord had been very reverently laid in the grave by loving friends, who never expected He would soon return to life so wonderfully changed. But the unexpected happened by a miracle. That very body became glorified, as in a moment, and He stepped forth from the tomb. Nothing but this can explain all that Easter means, and those who saw Him have borne their witness that it was even so. All the triumphs of Jesus in His Church since that day bear it out.

(3) OUR WITNESS TO THE RISEN LORD

We must pass now to its sequel. What did it all lead to? The answer is clear.

The Resurrection brought all the disciples of our Lord to a confident faith in Him and loyalty to His cause. In the Acts of the Apostles there is a very instructive passage which I want you to remember. We are told (iv. 32), "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul," and it goes on, "and with great power gave the apostles witness of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great grace was upon them all." Let us try to think what this means. Within a few weeks or months after the first Easter Day, the followers of Jesus Christ were bearing their witness to our Saviour as the risen and ascended Lord and King. No one would have believed, from the appearance of things on the day He was crucified, that such words could ever be written, but they were. The Apostles who gave their witness were bold and vigorous and resolute. Great grace was upon them all; the beauty of the Lord our God was upon them and all they did. They did their part. Are we ready to do ours? Let us think what we can do to add our witness to the risen Lord.

1. *We must be loyal to Him.* "Now above the sky He's King." That is the trumpet note of Easter. We have

been thinking much in recent months about our new King Edward VIII, who is to be crowned next year in Westminster Abbey. He has already captured our loyalty and devotion. But we know that, above all earthly kings, there is Christ the King. Every day, and in all we do at home, at school, at work or at play, in church and outside, He claims our love as well as our loyalty, and still says "Follow Me."

2. *We must be loyal in worship and in His service.* Every Sunday is the Lord's day, not the Lord's hour. Every Sunday is a festival of the Resurrection, and we should worship God in Him. The Resurrection declared Jesus "to be the Son of God with power," and so, in the Eucharist and in our private prayers, we should kneel to offer Him our homage. As we grow up let us resolve to put first in our life the duty of worship, and be happy to do our Christian duty. We shall find strength of character if we do so. Worship will hallow our life and send us to our work as happy, serviceable people. Then as of old, so now, great grace will be upon us all. Never imagine for a moment that the grace of God is a spent force. No, as St. Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

3. One word more. *By His Resurrection Jesus Christ brought new life to us all.* Don't we, as boys and girls, love new things, at home and in school? A new brother or sister is born in our home. Don't we love the new baby-child? Don't we cherish the new pet when it arrives for us to care for? We know how eagerly we respond. In a wonderful way, Jesus, as the risen Lord, brought new life for every man, and even when we are young we can share it. Even in our baptism we were made partakers of His Resurrection. Let this Easter help us to feel it is ours, now and always. The new life is Eternal Life, for God has set it in our hearts.

7. THE JOY THAT LASTS

THE FORTY DAYS OF EASTERTIDE

E. D. SEDDING, S.S.J.E.

(1) EASTER JOY

WE wish each other on Easter morning "a happy Easter." We wish each other on Christmas morning—at least on our Christmas cards—"a merry Christmas." I wonder why we make this difference? I wonder why we could not say, "A merry Easter"? Perhaps you could. Does it sound right? "A merry Easter"?

Let's think it out. There is a real joy at Easter. There is no doubt of that. St. John tells us, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord"; and St. Luke says that "they believed not for joy." It seemed too good to be true when they saw their Master, as they thought, alive in their midst again. Could it really be He? Yet in a moment they knew it must be, because they saw the wound-prints in His hands. But it seemed at first too happy to be true.

Joy? Of course there is joy at Easter. Easter, as we sing in one of our hymns, is "the queen of feasts." Just when the fields and gardens are bursting out into leaf and blossom, when the skylarks are singing on the downs and the lambs are playing in the fields, and you people, boys and girls, come back for the holidays—there comes the Easter message, "Christ is risen! Christ is risen!" And we take the sad purple veils from our altars, and deck them in white again, and set our candles in the gleaming brass candlesticks, and bring our primroses and our daffodils,

and light our lamps from our paschal candle, and sing our Alleluias again. Of course there is joy at Easter. Who says that Christians have not a right to be happy at Easter, when their Lord is risen? Christ is risen, Alleluia!

(2) EASTER JOY COSTS

But why, then, do we not wish each other "a merry Easter"? Have you any idea of your own, I wonder?

I believe it is because Easter joy goes deeper. There is a pain about it. Easter joy is won at a cost. There is a difference between Easter joy and Christmas joy. Easter follows Lent and Holy Week. The Resurrection follows the Passion; and the Passion of Christ means, as you know, the suffering of Christ. Can the sufferings of the Lord Jesus be a merry matter? That is why, surely, we must look below the surface to understand the joy of Easter. Easter comes in the spring-time, it is true; but Easter joy does not depend on the blossoming of the cowslips or the blackbird's song. The lambs skip, just as your kitten plays, from what the French call "*joie de vivre*." It is a good expression, isn't it? "The joy of living." Don't you feel like that sometimes? I watched two different boys last week coming along the pavement opposite, as I walked up from the station to preach somewhere. They were running and jumping in a dance-step. I watched a little child, too, on Good Friday, skipping along between her father and mother. They did it without thinking, and very jolly they looked.

But Easter joy goes deeper than that. Easter joy does not depend on good spirits, nor on health, nor on youth. A patient in hospital can know it. Some years ago a young woman in a Moscow prison remembered, as she was being led along a corridor, that it was Easter Day. She had been warned not to utter a sound, but she was

so joyful at the thought that she shouted aloud the Easter greeting of the Russian Church, "Christ is risen!" And at once, from the cells around, where her fellow-Christians were imprisoned, came the reply, "He is risen indeed!" She was severely punished, but she said that she was not ashamed of what she had done, for she could not help expressing her joy.

You see that Easter joy is joy through sorrow. It is victory through pain. Easter Day follows Good Friday and Passiontide. Therefore only a Christian who has tried to keep the Lord Jesus company in Lent by some self-denial, however simple; only a Christian who has watched and prayed beneath the Cross on Good Friday, and has really tried to die to his old bad self and ugly tempers and dark, unloving thoughts, can truly cry "Alleluia!" As light breaks through the clouds and turns a grey day into sunshine, so for him Easter joy has broken through the sorrow that he feels for his sin. Easter joy, then, is a costly thing. It is gained only at the cost of pains and effort. That is why we cannot wish each other "a merry Easter."

(3) EASTER JOY LASTS

And there is one more thing to note about this Easter joy. It lasts. At least, it will if we try our best to make it last.

There are forty days of Lent to prepare us to keep the feast of Christ's Resurrection at Easter. How many of us remember that there are forty days of Eastertide in which we are to practise the lessons learnt in Lent and to make sure that we have really risen with Christ to new life? What, then, can we do, do you think, to keep the Lord Jesus in mind during these forty days? If we can only do that, we may be sure that our Easter joy won't

all fizzles away like the sparkle in your lemonade as soon as you pour it into a glass.

Let's just imagine what it would have been like to have lived among the disciples that first Eastertide. How wonderfully near the Lord Jesus must have seemed to them during those forty days before His Ascension. Now Peter sees Him; now the two disciples as they walk together and talk about Him; now the ten disciples see Him in the upper room as they are at table; then He shows Himself to the seven at their fishing, then to the five hundred on the Galilean mountain, then to the disciples at Jerusalem again. How holy earth must have seemed to them as they learnt that He might be near them all the time—wherever they were, whatever they were doing—although they could not see Him!

Do you think that they were the only fortunate ones? Can't we do that too? Easter was followed by the Ascension, and Ascension Day by Pentecost; and when the Holy Spirit came down to live in the hearts of Christians on that Whitsunday, He made our Lord's great promise come true: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

The Lord Jesus is by our side too. The two disciples who met Him on the way to Emmaus remembered afterwards that their heart seemed to "burn within them" as He explained the Scriptures to them. Have not we got the Scriptures too? And we can find Jesus talking with us every time we read the Gospel story. At table in the inn He made Himself known to them in "the breaking of the bread." Cannot you and I meet Jesus at Holy Communion whenever we wish to come? And at any moment of the day we can remember Him and talk to Him in our hearts. And what a difference it will make to the things we say and think about, if we know that He is with us all the time!

We can begin by practising this during the forty days of Eastertide. And when they are over? One day in the week, at least, can be a regular reminder of Easter all through the year, if we try to make it so. Perhaps you can guess which day that is.

Each Sunday is a remembrance of the day on which Jesus rose from the grave—"an Easter Day in every week." And by coming to worship regularly, like the early Christians, on "the first day of the week," to praise God and to thank Him for His love and for Christ's victory, we shall keep up our Easter joy on each Sunday of the year. And all the days of the week, too, we can think of Him near us in that new spiritual way for which He prepared His disciples during Eastertide.

And you won't ever imagine, will you, any of you, that to remember the Lord Jesus near you day by day is going to make your life less happy or less free? The greatest blessing that you can possibly give to any boy or girl is to help them to know Jesus their Saviour, and to show them how to bring Him into all that happens to them. He will bless all your friendships if you share them with Him—try Him and see if this is not true. He will keep your sport and your pleasures clean and unselfish. He will give you something worth while to live for, so that you will not think just of pleasing yourself, but how you can be at your best so that you may be of use to Him, and bring others closer to Him too.

And this is going to bring into your life a real lasting joy. Sometimes you see an advertisement on a passing 'bus or in a newspaper, showing a boy with a happy smile on his face, and you may think to yourself that it would do you good to have a picture like that to look at each morning, to help you to start the day cheerfully and bravely.

Easter joy is something better still; it goes deeper, and

so it doesn't wear off. It is the joy of comradeship with the living Christ, in whose company you can start out afresh each morning with a glad heart, because by His grace you are "risen with Christ," and you mean to follow those "good desires" which He puts into your heart, and to "seek those things which are above."

8. THE CROWNING OF THE KING

ASCENSION-DAY

P. B. THORBURN

We see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour.—Hebrews ii. 9.

(1) THE KING'S CORONATION

IN May 1937 there will be a wonderful procession in London. Bells will be ringing; flags will be flying; bands will be playing; crowds will be lining the streets to see the procession making its way to Westminster Abbey—for the coronation of our king!

Thousands and thousands of people will be in the streets to see the procession pass, but they will not be able to get into the Abbey to see the king crowned. Only the officers of the king may go into the Abbey—all the officials of the king's household, and the clergy, and important visitors from other countries—these will see the king crowned. The thousands of the king's subjects who stand in the streets will not see the ceremony of the coronation, but they will know that the king is being crowned, although they do not see it.

Nearly two thousand years ago there was a procession—not through the streets of a city, but along dusty country roads, to a quiet hillside. No flags were flying, no bands were playing, no bells were ringing; there were no great crowds of people, there were only a few ordinary men walking quietly along together; but they were going to a Coronation also—they were going to the Coronation of Jesus our King.

Jesus had asked them to meet Him on a mountain-side

in Galilee. They knew that Jesus must leave them and return to His Father in heaven, but they did not know when it would be or how it would happen. When they met Jesus they asked Him if He was going to give them their kingdom back again and become their earthly King. Jesus told them it was not for them to know when the Kingdom on earth would come, but, if they would be faithful and true to Him, they would have power from Him to make His Kingdom come on earth. Then He lifted up His hands and blessed them, and as He was blessing them He was slowly lifted up above their heads and disappeared in a bright shining cloud. Jesus, our King, had gone back to His heavenly home to sit upon the Throne of God and to be crowned as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The disciples couldn't see Jesus crowned, any more than the crowds in the streets will see King Edward crowned; but they knew that He was crowned when He reached God's Throne in heaven above.

Jesus passed from their sight, as King Edward will pass from the sight of the watching crowds in the streets, through the great doors of Westminster Abbey; but Jesus passed into the boundless courts of heaven, and was hidden from the sight of the disciples by a cloud of silvery light. On Ascension Day we think of Jesus passing to His Throne to be crowned as King of all the worlds.

Every earthly king, if he is a Christian, has to remember that Jesus is King over all. When King Edward is crowned in Westminster Abbey the Archbishop of Canterbury will place in the king's right hand an orb, or ball of gold, encrusted with jewels and having upon it a jewelled cross, and the Archbishop will say to the king: "When you see this orb thus set under the Cross, remember that the whole world is under the power and authority of Christ our Redeemer."

(2) THE KING ON HIS THRONE

Now, Jesus is King of all the world; but does everybody remember that? If they did, His Kingdom would quickly come on earth, and there would be no more cruelty, no more injustice, no more selfishness and sin. All Christians know that Christ is King, but He has left us to rule for Him, and if we are not loyal and obedient to His commands His Kingdom will not come. Our king is Emperor of India, but he sends someone called a viceroy to rule for him in India. If the viceroy were to forget all that the king had told him, and did not take the trouble to see that his laws were obeyed, the kingdom would soon be lost in India, and the king-emperor forgotten.

There is a legend that when Jesus had returned to His Throne on His Ascension Day, one of the archangels asked Him what plan He had made to save the world. Jesus replied, "I have died upon the cross to save the world." The archangel said, "But what if the world forgets?" Jesus answered, "I have told My followers to tell the whole world the story of My love, and if they will do so and witness for Me, I will be with them always, even unto the end of the world." But the archangel said again, "But if the followers forget?" Jesus replied, "I have no other plan." Do not let us forget our King in heaven above.

But Jesus rules by love, and not by force. All the laws that have made the world a better place to live in came from the love of Jesus, and not from the force of man. Even the disciples thought that Jesus could rule by force if He wanted to and make the world acknowledge him as King; and Jesus had to go away and send His Holy Spirit from His Throne above to show the disciples, and us, that His Kingdom can only come by love.

An island in the South Pacific Ocean was inhabited by

savages. Slave raiders were always stealing boys from the island and selling them in other parts of the world. But there was one visitor to the island who came to teach the law of love and save them from their bad habits. His name was John Coleridge Patteson, and he was a Bishop of our Church. He did not know when he sailed towards this island that the slave-raiders had made a dummy like him and placed it in the front of their vessel so that the islanders should think they were on an errand of peace! The islanders thought that the Bishop had taken five of their boys to be slaves, and so, when he came and walked up the beach, they shot at him with arrows, and threw spears at him from behind the bushes, and wounded him in five places, so that, soon after reaching his vessel again, he died. But when the islanders learnt the truth, and knew that he had come in love to save them and their children, they were very sorry, and they listened to the missionaries who came after, and became changed in their lives so that Jesus did rule there afterwards. That island is called Nukapu, and there is a cross there to the memory of Bishop Patteson, and those once-savage islanders are now Christian, and a few years ago they sent some money for Christian work in the slums of London. So Jesus became the King in the hearts of the islanders of Nukapu because His servant Bishop Patteson had been loyal to His rule; and if we are loyal to the rule of Jesus in our hearts, then Jesus will reign wherever we go.

(3) THE KING IN HIS HOME

But Jesus has not only passed to His Throne at His Ascension. He has also returned to His home. Jesus came from heaven. He came from God the Father, when He was born a little Baby to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and when He ascended into heaven He was only going home again!

What a wonderful thing it must have been to Jesus to return home! On earth He often had nowhere to lay His head. On earth people were often unkind to Him and rude to Him. Now He was going back to God, His Heavenly Father, to His home where all was love and joy and peace, and He would hear the hymns and praises of the angels and archangels and all the company of heaven! We must rejoice that Jesus has returned in triumph to His home above the starry skies! Yes! we must rejoice for Jesus' sake, but we must rejoice for our own sakes too, for the home of Jesus is our home also! We have no eternal home here. When our bodies die, our spirits will want a home; and the Ascension of Jesus has shown us where that home will be—it will be for ever with Him.

But do you think that we are fit to dwell in the Palace of our King? I don't think we are, but He will make us fit to enter in. If Jesus had not been born a little human baby, we could not have been sure of that. We should think, "How can anybody from earth enter heaven and dwell with God!" But because Jesus *was* a human baby, and grew up to be a man on earth, suffering all that we suffer, and feeling all that we feel of joy and sorrow and love and pity, and then ascended up into heaven, we can be quite sure that He will make us fit to enter in and that He will find a place for us—if we trust Him and try to serve Him here below.

" He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good
That we might go at last to heaven
Saved by His precious blood."

A prince was once in exile in a foreign land. His father, the king, had been killed, and he had had to fly from the country. But in his exile he never forgot that he was a king, and he was always longing to return to his own land. He found some good friends in the country

of his exile, but most of the people laughed at the idea of his being a king and having a kingdom of his own. One of the people who believed in him and helped him was a young man who had been a slave and whom the prince had bought and made free. At last the time came when the prince thought he could go back to his own land, but he had to go secretly and alone. When he was setting sail in the darkness of the night he said to his servant whom he had made his friend, "When I have been crowned King, I will send a message to you. You must come to my country, and show this ring when you get to my palace gates, and my servants will let you in, and I will give you then all that you need, and you shall live with me in peace for the rest of your life."

Some years passed by, and at last a message was brought secretly to the young man that he too was to set sail for the kingdom. After some journeying and adventures he arrived at the gates of the king's palace. He was very ragged and dusty, and the soldiers at the gate would not let him in to see the king. But he showed them his ring, and at that they called an officer who at once led him to the audience chamber of the king. The king came to him leaving his throne and his ministers, and took him by the hand, and told his servants to bring new clothes and to give the young man all he needed, for he said: "He was faithful to me in my exile, and he has trusted to my promise, and now my home shall be his also!"

Jesus was in exile on earth. He came into exile for our sakes. If we are faithful to Him, and trust His promise, his heavenly home shall be ours also, for He will acknowledge us when this life is over.

(4) THE KING WITH HIS PEOPLE

Yes! Jesus has passed to His Throne and his home, but He has not left His people altogether. He has sent us

His Holy Spirit to be our Guide and Strengtheners. Indeed, He is more with us than when He lived in His earthly body on earth, for when He had an earthly body it could only be in one place at a time. When He was in Galilee He could not be in Samaria—or anywhere else! But by His Holy Spirit He can be wherever “two or three are gathered together” in His Name!

The Ascension of our King does not mean that our King no longer cares for us, but that now He cares for us very much, and has gone to prepare a home for us and can be and will be with us always, even unto the end of the world—if we will try to be witnesses for Him.

An old native woman in Jamaica once surprised the governor of that island by insisting on seeing him and giving into his hands an embroidered mat that she had made for Queen Victoria, and by asking the governor to send a message to the queen begging for a little money to live upon because her only son had died in the queen’s service. “I am the queen’s subject!” the old woman proudly said: “and the queen cares for me although she has never seen me! My family has served the queen, and she will not forget her subject or leave her in misery!” The gift and the message were sent, and Queen Victoria sent a special letter back again with instructions that the old woman was to be cared for at the queen’s expense. So the old woman’s faith in her sovereign was rewarded.

Our Sovereign and King, even Jesus, cares for us and will not forsake us, if we put our faith in Him and send our petitions to Him in our prayers, for He “ever liveth to make intercession for us.” Jesus is on His Throne; Jesus is in his home; and we may “in heart and mind thither ascend and with Him continually dwell,” for His home is to be our home too!

9. THE HOLY STAIRS

A SERMON FOR ASCENSION DAY

H. W. THORNE

Our citizenship is in heaven.—Philippians iii. v. 20.

(1) THE STORY OF THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

LET us imagine ourselves in Jerusalem, with the eleven Apostles, on the first Ascension Day, a little more than 1900 years ago. It is just six weeks ago, on a Thursday night, that the Lord Jesus took us into the upper room where He gave us the Holy Communion, and afterwards led us out to the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives, where all those terrible things happened and He was taken and crucified . . . just six weeks!

The Apostles have seen Him several times since then. In fact, I suppose they are beginning to feel that He is always very near to them, though they cannot see Him, because, when He does come, He always knows exactly what they have said. For a whole week Thomas had kept on saying *he* didn't believe that Jesus had risen and was alive. Then, when the Lord did appear, He knew every word that Thomas had said. So, though He is not always with them, as He used to be before He was crucified, they are beginning to feel, as I have said, that He is close at hand, and at any minute may make Himself visible and appear before them.

Now on this very day He comes again, and He takes them with Him on the same walk that He did six weeks ago; but how different they feel! Then they were full of sorrow and fear, now they are full of joy and gladness. They go

out through the city gate down the hill, over the little River Kidron and climb up the Mount of Olives, passing by the Garden of Gethsemane, until they are over against the little village of Bethany. Then, while our Lord was blessing His disciples, He began to rise up from the earth and ascend into the skies. They watched Him going up higher and higher until a cloud floated along beneath Him and hid Him from their sight. While they were still gazing up into the heavens, they heard a voice. Looking round, they saw two young men in white garments, who asked them why they were looking up into the sky. "This same Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

We might suppose that as the Apostles went back alone to Jerusalem they would feel sad, because the Lord had left them and gone into heaven; but they did not feel at all sad. St. Luke tells us they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and I think that must have been because they did not feel that our Lord had gone right away from them. There is a hymn which begins "Up in heaven, up in heaven, in the bright place far away," but there is no reason to think that heaven is "far away." Heaven is all round about us, wherever God is. Our Lord disappeared from sight while He was ascending—that is, going up; so that His disciples, when they worshipped Him and when they tried to follow His example, should think of Him as "the Lord high and lifted up," the great King over all the earth higher than all kings and emperors, or the great High Priest going up into the Temple to offer our worship to God. So, when I say to you "Lift up your hearts," what do you reply? Say the answer all together: "We lift them up unto the Lord." Perhaps another story will help us to see how we can lift up our hearts, our thoughts and wishes into the presence of the Ascended Lord.

(2) THE ASCENSION OF OUR THOUGHTS

A good many years ago there was a young man at Oxford, who was a very fine athlete. He was a famous oarsman, and rowed in the Oxford boat at a time when Oxford generally won the Boat Race. To the grief of all his friends, he fell ill and died. When his friends were packing up his belongings, they looked at his Bible. They found a mark against one verse, and against it was written one word, "Splendid." This was the verse which the famous athlete thought was splendid. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

(Perhaps you would like to say that verse after me.)

What we think about is most important, because thinking is like the root of a plant. Thinking sprouts into words and deeds. Good thoughts make good characters. Now, when St. Paul wrote that splendid verse, he had been thinking about our Lord in heaven, and he said a curious thing. He said "Our citizenship is in heaven."

That is curious, because some people say that all the people who lived in those days thought the universe was like a house with three stories: a flat earth where we live, and a heaven right away above the skies, and hell down underneath the earth. Perhaps they did, but St. Paul seems to think that heaven is not far away, because he tells Christians that, though they are living on earth, they are citizens of heaven, where Christ is. Their thoughts must be there where everything is true and honest and just and pure and lovely. This is one of the ways in which Christians who are members of Christ share our Lord's Ascension.

In our thoughts and our prayers (thoughts and prayers are much the same thing) we must seek those things that are above and live with Him in heaven. Animals walk on four legs with their heads down, and if they think at all, they think about things below—about eating and drinking; we human beings have to think about those things too, but we walk upright and carry our heads high and can think of higher things.

(3) THE ASCENSION OF OUR LIVES

I expect you know the song that the poet Longfellow wrote about the young man who climbed a mountain, carrying the banner with the word "Excelsior" on it. Mountain-climbing has a great fascination for many people; the higher you climb the farther you can see, and the air is clean and pure and bracing; but it is difficult and perilous work, climbing, and it requires much courage to face the perils, and much perseverance to overcome the difficulties.

Now, we cannot ascend into heaven by climbing mountains or get to Christ by going up miles in an aeroplane. A great teacher, St. Augustine, said, "Not by intervals of space, but by likeness do we draw near to God, and by unlikeness do we depart from Him." We have to climb in our character and become like God in order to ascend into heaven, and we need just as much courage and perseverance as people who climb mountains. We cannot do it all at once.

There is a house at Rome with a wonderful staircase. It is made of marble, and called the "Sancta Scala," or Holy Stairs. The story they tell about these marble steps is that they were the steps in the house of Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem, the very steps up which our blessed Lord climbed when He suffered under Pontius Pilate, and that

when the Empress Helena visited Palestine 1600 years ago she found them and had them removed to Rome.

Pilgrims come from all over the world to see them, but they never walk up them. They go up very slowly on their knees, one step at a time, and they stay kneeling on each step and say a little prayer, until they reach the top, where there is a little chapel. So there are virtues which we have to win as we go through life, and it is rather like ascending holy stairs. In the second Epistle of St. Peter, in the New Testament, we are told to add to our faith virtue, and to our virtue knowledge, and to our knowledge temperance, and to our temperance patience, and to our patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. So the Christian life is a climbing life. We go on trying to add one virtue to another.

I read the other day about a man who was described as a man of "lofty character." Lofty is rather like the word ascended: one who has climbed high. While his body is on earth, his thoughts are in heaven. While he is a citizen of England and a loyal subject of King Edward, he always remembers that his citizenship is in heaven, and he is a loyal citizen of "another King, one Jesus," who to-day ascended to His Throne on high, because He is King of kings and Lord of lords, whose Kingdom shall have no end.

Now will you stand up and say after me the collect for Ascension Day?

"Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that like as we do believe Thy only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens; so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with Him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen."

10. THE POWER FOR TO-DAY

WHITSUNDAY

P. R. GROVE

Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you : and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem . . . and unto the uttermost part of the earth.—Acts i. 8.

(1) INTRODUCTION

WHEN you came into church this afternoon, I expect one of the first things that you noticed was the beautiful bright red altar frontal, and then the red and white flowers in the altar vases and the red book-markers in our big Bible on the lectern. As the Church's seasons change, so do the colours with which we decorate our church change with them. And if I were to ask you why we use red on this particular Sunday, I expect you would give me some such answer as I received from a girl two or three years ago. She said, "The Holy Ghost came down like a flame of fire on the Apostles on the first Whitsunday."

(2) THE FIRST WHITSUNDAY

Let us briefly go over that story which most of us have heard many times already.

You probably know that in Eastern countries, where it is very hot in the middle of the day, people get up very early in the morning, as soon as it is light, and generally have a rest round about mid-day. On this particular Sunday there had been a great service in the Temple at Jerusalem at sunrise. It had been a kind of Harvest Thanksgiving

Service, with the offering to God of loaves of bread made out of the newly-threshed corn. Perhaps some of the Lord's Apostles and friends had been at that service. Anyway, we see them making their way quietly to a house in Jerusalem which possessed a large upper room which could be reached by a staircase from the inner courtyard. (Some years ago I made a drawing of what this house may have been like, and I have put it up in the Children's Corner, so that you may have a chance of having a look at it after service is over.)

Suppose we could have been there in that upper room, whom should we have seen?

There were St. Peter and the other Apostles. The Mother of our Lord, Mary Magdalene perhaps, Lazarus perhaps, and some of the other friends from Bethany. Perhaps Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa, and, I am almost sure, the man and woman who lived in the house, who were followers of the Lord Jesus. We should have heard them offering prayer to God and talking about the wonderful meetings they had had with the Lord Jesus after He rose from the dead. We should have noticed an air of expectancy with them. Some new experience was to be theirs before very long. The Lord Jesus had told them about it before His Ascension. They were to receive a new power and begin a new life of witness to Him.

(3) THE NEW POWER DESCENDS

Then, all at once, it happened. They were suddenly conscious of a new Something which had come into the room. It seemed to be filled with the very breath of heaven itself. There could be no doubt about it. They had all heard for a moment a loud sound, which sounded more like the sound of a terrific gust of wind than anything else—but it was no ordinary wind. Other people outside

heard it too, and wondered whatever it could be, and felt a little frightened. Then again there was something to be seen as well as heard. They felt themselves enwrapped in the glowing warmth of some mysterious celestial fire, and, as they looked at one another, there was a strange light, like a small flame of fire hovering over the head of each one of them; but interesting as these things were, the friends of our Lord experienced something else that was far more important. They felt that our Lord Jesus Christ had come back to them in a new and wonderful way, and that henceforth He would always be with them. They knew that a new power and a new strength, a new peace and a new realisation of His Presence had come to them, and that henceforth nothing was too hard to do or to bear, because He was with them, strengthening, guiding and encouraging them.

(4) "WITNESSES UNTO ME"

Almost before they were aware of it they began to draw upon this new power and to do wonderful things.

I said a moment ago that other people besides the Apostles had heard this strange noise and wondered what it was. Now they came flocking into the streets to try and find out.

"What is it?" they asked. "What has happened?" they cried.

Peter and the other Apostles tried to tell them. "We are followers of the Lord Jesus," they said, "Who was crucified in this city nearly two months ago; but He is not dead, as you suppose, but gloriously alive, seated at the right hand of God. He has poured out on us the gift of the Holy Spirit, as He Himself promised, and as some of our own Prophets have foretold. He has filled us with joy and happiness, with power and strength. We are new

men. Henceforth for time and for eternity we are His men."

Peter spoke with such eloquence and fire and with such a wonderful intonation, so unlike that of the ordinary Galilean fisherman, that a few of the foolish people in the crowd said, "Why, the man doesn't know what he's saying. Surely he's drunk." But the great majority knew very well that these were not the words of a drunken man, and they began to think that something very wonderful must have happened, and so they started to ask questions.

"What must we do if we would experience this new power, this new joy, this new peace in our hearts?"

Peter told them.

It was Jesus, and Jesus alone, who had made this thing possible. They must begin by accepting Him as the "Chosen one of God," the "Sent One" of the Most High. They must learn to put Him at the centre of all their thinking and planning, and finally they must openly confess that they were His followers by being baptised in His name.

Some 3000 people accepted these conditions and were baptised, and before very long they too became conscious of a new Power in their lives casting out fear and hatred and filling them with a new strength, a new vision, a new peace, a new joy, and above all a new desire to tell others of the great change that had come over them, and of Jesus their newly found Friend and Lord.

(5) THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO-DAY

The story I have just told you happened a long time ago in Jerusalem; but the experience which came to these men and women who listened to St. Peter on the day of Pentecost still comes to men and women to-day—not in one place, but all the world over.

Let me tell you how it came to a great friend of mine. We will call him Bill, though that is not his real name. Bill is a miner, and works down a coal-pit. I expect you know that miners are very badly paid and often out of work altogether. Bill was like that. He was married and had several children, including one little crippled girl. Bill didn't like seeing them going without proper food and clothing, and he didn't make matters any better by his own drinking habits. His heart was filled with thoughts of fear and hatred against people in general and the rich in particular, because they didn't seem to care. One day he was actually arrested and put in prison for inciting men to riot.

And then a friend persuaded him to go and stay at a house where a number of people were meeting together who, like St. Peter and the others, had experienced the changing power of the Holy Spirit in their own lives. Bill went; but although everyone was kind to him, he felt terribly out of it, and all the talk that he heard only made him feel angry. What men like himself wanted, he felt, was a proper week's work and a week's wage at the end of it. So he slipped away quietly and got his bag, and was going home, when someone saw him and asked him all about it.

His new friend told him the story you have just heard—how the Holy Spirit can and does give to men a new strength, a new outlook and a new life. Bill stopped and listened, and little by little conviction came over him. He made up his mind that he too would become a follower of the Lord Jesus and invite this Living Christ to take charge of his life and help him.

Bill is still a miner. He still carries heavy burdens and he is often out of work and on the dole, but he has found that new strength, that new courage, that new peace. Envy and hatred have gone out of his heart, and now Bill is the friend of everyone. Like St. Peter, too, Bill has dis-

covered how to witness for his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and people who hear him say how wonderfully he speaks. Even well-educated people are glad to listen to him, for he speaks with authority—the only authority that doesn't put people off—the authority of experience.

Most of you boys and girls were baptised when you were very tiny babies, and the gift of the Holy Spirit was given to you then in some degree; but it is only as we get old enough, to decide for ourselves that we will follow the Lord Jesus and take Him for our Captain and our Guide for life, that we begin to experience the full power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. You will do that definitely and openly when you are confirmed. But never lose sight of the fact that He is here with us now, and that you too can experience His Power, His Guidance, and His comforting Love, just as the first followers of the Lord Jesus did, on the first Whitsunday, whenever you really and truly desire to do so.

11. "I OUGHT : I CAN : I MUST"

HARVEST

STUART BLOFELD

Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.—Galatians vi. 7.

(1) "THINGS MUST"

THE word "shall" is perhaps not strong enough, so I am going to use "must" instead, and put it this way: "If a farmer sows wheat, the harvest *must* be wheat, not barley or oats," and I will make the word "must" the key-word of my sermon.

Generally, when you use the word "must," you mean that there is no choice about it. Perhaps this is best seen in what we call the World of Science. If you throw a cricket ball into the air, it *must* come down again; if you explode a mixture of two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen, water *must* be the result. Because God rules Nature by laws, then the earth and the other planets *must* travel on fixed paths round the sun; they have no choice. Day *must* be followed by night, and summer by winter, and seedtime by harvest. And so it is that machines do their work and cars travel.

(2) PEOPLE MUST?

But what about men and women and boys and girls? *Must* they always do a certain thing and have they no choice in the matter?

There lies the difference between human beings and the material things in Nature. Have you ever realised that God does not force us to be good people, so that we cannot

possibly be bad? But we sadly know too well that we do sometimes choose, and make a wrong choice. Of course we know that people are sometimes obliged or forced to do what they do not want to do, and cannot exercise any choice, like the prisoner who has to go where the policeman takes him, or the boy who feels he *must* do the right thing, because he is overcome by fear of the consequences if he does wrong.

(3) THE GOOD "MUST"

But now I want to talk about a good use of the word "must," and so I remind you of the words used by a Boy of twelve, who, we believe, was the best a boy could be, and who once said, "I *must* be about my Father's business."

Real Boy as He was, He was our perfect pattern—Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He must have seemed very wilful to those who heard Him, until they understood. He often used the word "must." "I *must* preach the Kingdom of God"; I *must* work the works of Him that sent Me." Did He not know that He had the power to choose, did He not know the sting of being tempted to make a wrong choice? Of course He did, but He choose the right.

(4) MUSTS, GOOD AND BAD

There are lots of "I musts" in life. The coward's "must," because he gives up resisting. The "must" of the man who believes that he is fated to do the wrong thing. Some sad and tragical reason like this must have moved the man who once wrote the Greek word for "must" on a tower in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in one of Victor Hugo's stories.

How easy it is sometimes to find excuses for doing wrong! "I had to do it because fate seemed against me," or "I am not like other people whom you call good," or "My friends do the same" or "It is the general custom." Sometimes

rather foolish people try to excuse themselves, or their children, for not trying hard to do the right thing, by saying, "Men must be men," or "Boys will be boys."

Now let us come to the right kind of "I must," as our Lord said it, for instance. And what He said was what we can try to say and act up to, and His Holy Spirit is always ready to help us. In Him there was an inward and spiritual law of which He was always conscious, to do what was right. He called it God's business—God's will, and it meant so much to Him that He felt bound to follow it.

We can understand it a little by thinking of some of our good friends. Sometimes it is said of a boy, "He cannot lie," "he could never do a mean trick." That does not really mean, that he could never choose to lie or be mean. It means that he has tried to do what he knows to be right, and in his prayer and perseverance in using the power that God promises, and has done it so continually, that it is utterly hateful to him to tell a lie or to be mean and selfish; and he is so regularly to be depended upon that people come to speak of him in that way. "You will always get truth from him—you can always depend upon him." He may fail sometimes, but he will never give up trying to be what God means him to be. It is very hard sometimes, but the grace that God gives us is always at hand for him to use.

(5) THE CHRISTIAN'S "MUST"

I said just now that God does not force us to be good, though He forces the planets to travel on certain fixed paths, and forces the harvest of the earth to come if seeds have been sown. But instead of forcing us, He leaves us always with the power to choose (Is not that a great compliment He pays us, if we may talk in that way about God?). And then, having given us the power to choose, instead of forcing us, He persuades us to make the right choice. And

He uses the greatest way, to persuade us, that we can imagine. He died for us to show His love for us and His hatred of what is wrong and selfish. And if we would only believe in Him, He tells us that He believes in us, and claims our service and gives us His spirit to enable us to say "I *must* be about the Father's business," and to act up to it.

If this is how we take our Lord Jesus Christ into our living and thinking and acting, then the text loses some of the terror of its message.

"Whatsoever a man sows, that must he reap," is a warning which we often see come true. It is a law of God, and if all I think about is myself and all I want, and all I selfishly mean to do, then I *must* reap a harvest of evil consequences. But there is the glorious side—that if we are doing our best to sow good seed, choosing the good rather than the bad; and when we fail—as we often do—still persevering towards what is true and beautiful and good, and keeping God and His love in the centre of all we think and do—then in due time, if we faint not and never give up, we shall reap the harvest that God means to be the harvest of a good life; and then our Father's business will be that to which all our prayers and lives are given. We all know "I ought." We learn to be able to say, with God's help, "I can" and in God's mercy and love that can become "I must." That is the way the good harvest comes in our lives. "I ought—I can—I must."

12. THE LIVING STONES

A DEDICATION FESTIVAL

A. JESSOP PRICE

This is none other than the house of God.—Genesis xxviii. 17.

(1) INTRODUCTION

THERE is one day in the year, I expect, that you look forward to more than any other. I mean your birthday.

You probably have some friends in to tea, and Mother makes you a specially nice cake, whilst Father gives you a present of something that you have been wanting for ever so long. They are both very happy that day, because it is the day on which God gave you to them. To-day we are keeping your Church's birthday, and we are all gathered here for your Church's birthday-party. We are all very happy too, for this is the day on which this building was dedicated—that is, "given to God," so that we can say, as Jacob said after he had seen the angels in his dream, "This is none other than the House of God."

(2) THE CHURCH THAT WE CAN SEE

This church has probably been built so long that there is nobody here who can remember it being built, so we shall have to use our imaginations; for I want you to try to picture in your minds the scene years ago, when this lovely building was coming into being.

First of all there were just green fields, then the foundations would be laid. Look at those big, strong stones at the foot of each pillar, holding all the weight of the building.

Those must be enormously important, for if they were cracked, or if they crumbled at all, the whole place would come tumbling down on our heads. But no doubt the builders chose these stones with extra special care, for they are as strong to-day as on the day they were first put in.

Then at the top of the pillars, and in many other places about the church, we can see stones that have been carved, beautifully shaped by hands that must have been very patient as they slowly turned the rough lump of stone into those fine and delicate figures, making here an angel, and there some vines, with the grapes and leaves. How wonderful it must have been for those craftsmen of old to think, as they worked, that this would soon be a house of God, and that though they themselves would be gone and forgotten, other Christians would come here, Sunday by Sunday, sitting in the seats they had made, kneeling before the same altar, worshipping the same God, praying the same prayers and lifting up their voices in praise and thanksgiving.

Just as we picture the workmen who did the actual building, so we can picture the people for whom the church was being built, the people who lived here all that long time ago. The church was their gift to God too; for they had been working and saving and giving, or there would have been no money to pay for the building. No doubt they often came to watch the workmen during the time that the church was actually being built, and imagined to themselves, as they saw it rise, stone by stone, into a beautiful house of God, that some particular little bit was their own contribution. At last the day came when all was ready, and the Bishop came to consecrate it, to make it a house set apart for holy things, a house in which God Himself would really live in the hearts of those who came to worship Him here. How happy they would be at that great opening service—from the greatest to the least, from the rich man who had given a great deal, to the poor man who was glad to have

somewhere to say his prayers, from the old man who had been looking forward to this all his life, to the smallest child who had been excited at the hammerings of the busy workmen, and whose parents brought him to the church, that, like the child Samuel who was brought to the Temple, he might "grow before the Lord." Of course the thing that made everyone so happy was that they all felt a personal interest, for every one of them had, through their gifts, their prayers, and their labours, been responsible for the building.

(3) THE MAN WHO GAVE HIS HOUSE

Once upon a time St. Francis and his monks were building a church on a hill-top in Italy. Now, they were very poor, for they had all given all that they possessed to God for the use of those who were even worse off than they were themselves. As a result they had to do all the building themselves, for they couldn't afford to pay workmen. But the foundations of their church were laid, and the walls began to grow, and St. Francis was very happy to see the new house of God begin to take shape. They all sang for joy as they worked, and the walls grew steadily higher and higher, day by day, until the church was nearly finished.

But one day the work stopped, and there were no singing monks; instead they just stood and looked at the unfinished church, with rather sad faces. They wanted badly to go on working, but they couldn't, for there was no more stone, and it costs a lot of money to buy stone, when you have to get it in big square blocks for building. As they looked at the church they didn't see a man who was coming up the hill. He was puffing and panting as he struggled up the steep slope, for he was pushing a wheelbarrow. He quite startled the monks when, with a crash, he tipped up his wheelbarrow just behind them, and there on the

grass were some lovely big stones. No wonder the man looked so hot after having pushed them up all that way!

St. Francis and the monks were so pleased that they seized the stones and began at once to shape them ready for putting into the walls, and, when they turned round to thank the little man who had brought them, he was nearly down at the bottom of the hill, so they just waved a "Thank you" to him as he passed out of sight. But before they had got the stones into position, there he was again coming up the hill with another barrowful. At this the monks sang the praise of God as they worked, with even happier and stronger voices than before, and St. Francis ran to help push the stones up the hill.

"But you are a poor man, my friend. Where are you getting all this beautiful stone from?" he asked. "Well, you know, brother," the poor man replied, "it was sad to see the work stop for lack of stone, and I hadn't any money to buy stone for you, but I lived in a little stone cottage down there at the foot of the hill, and I am just pulling it down and wheeling it up to the top."

That is how we must make our gifts to God, as unselfishly as that man did, and those who built this church did in their day; for we are their children, and God's children, and must serve Him as they did—although our particular task is not to build a new church, but to preserve this one so that in this parish men and women may continue to worship God and to praise His Holy Name.

(4) THE CHURCH THAT WE CANNOT SEE

If I stopped talking now, I am afraid I should be doing more harm than good, for I should be leaving in your minds the idea that the "church" means a beautiful building and nothing more, which would not only be quite wrong, but would be definitely un-Christian; for the Church of

God is most certainly not a large number of buildings scattered all over the world. As St. Paul said, when he was preaching to the men of Athens, "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands," and later, when he was writing to the Christians in Corinth, he wrote, "The Temple of God is holy, which Temple ye are."

So we see that there is a spiritual Church which is even more important, and that we form the stones that go to the building of it. Every person who is baptised a Christian becomes at once a part of that Church, a stone in the most important building that has ever been. Every stone must be sound and strong, for if only a few stones in a wall are weak, they will bring the whole wall crashing to the ground.

As in this building that we can see there are foundation-stones upon which all this church rests, so in the Church Spiritual there are the men who occupy the leading positions, and upon whose shoulders the responsibility for the governing of the Church is placed. We should always remember, in our prayers, those who have been called to high office in the Church of Christ, the Archbishops and the Bishops, praying that they may have the strength, the wisdom and the love to perform the very difficult task that has been set them.

Then there are those who, like the carved stones in the building, have some special gift to dedicate to the service of God—business men, who act as churchwardens or on Church Councils; doctors and teachers, who go overseas to work amongst races less fortunate than ourselves; musicians, who by composing, playing or singing contribute their own special gift to the glory of the Church of God. Most of us have, if we will only realise it, some gift that, later on, we shall be able to make.

You will remember the story that Jesus once told about the master who gave gifts to his servants, and then went

away and left them to use the gifts in his absence. On his return the master praised all the servants who had used the gifts for his benefit; although the gifts of some of them had been small, and they had not been able to do much with them, provided they had tried, the master was satisfied. But there was one servant who hid his talent and did not use it. With him alone the master was angry, because he had been lazy in not using the gifts that had been given him. We have to be careful, then, that when we grow up we don't waste our talents, but take our proper place in the work of building the Church, finding the right corner in the building into which our own particular stone is supposed to fit.

(5) MAKING THE STONES

All the time we are growing then, we should be shaping ourselves. We call it "building our characters," and, like the shaping of a stone, it cannot be done quickly, but requires time and patience. If a mason wants to cut a stone into a certain shape, he doesn't take a big sledge-hammer and hit it with all his might; for that would shatter the stone to tiny bits and make it worthless. Instead he takes a chisel and a light mallet, and taps and taps at the stone until, ever so slowly, it takes the shape that he wants it to have. So with us, it isn't one big thing we have to do, but hundreds of little ones: to keep on being honest, to keep on being kind, to keep on saying our prayers. Then, and only then, shall we become beautiful stones in the building of God.

A friend was one day watching the famous sculptor Michael Angelo at work, and he was amazed at his patience as he chipped and chipped so gently at the marble that he was to turn into a statue. "How careful you are over each of those hundreds of little taps you make!" he said. To which the sculptor replied, "But you see, my friend, these trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle."

You are, then, each of you, a stone in the Church of God. See to it that, whether you be a foundation stone or a delicate piece of carving, or just an ordinary stone in the wall—as most of us must be—you are solid, strong, to be trusted, and worthy of being part of the Temple of which Jesus Himself is the chief corner-stone.

II. WORSHIP AND PRAYER

1. HOW TO SAY OUR PRAYERS

G. W. SKEET

Lord, teach us to pray.—St. Luke xi. 1.

(1) INTRODUCTION

IF you go to one of the beautiful parts of England in summer, you will see many artists sketching or painting beautiful pictures. Such people often wish to be alone and undisturbed, but one day a certain artist, when he was painting, turned and saw a small lad standing close behind him, watching him just as intently as curious boys will watch anything or anybody in whom they are interested. Nothing was said for a time; the painter went on with his work, the boy still watched, and at last the artist asked the lad what he wanted.

The reply was: "I would love to paint as you can, sir." "Have you ever tried?" said the artist. "Oh, yes," was the boy's reply, "but I have no one to teach me."

The artist knew the boy wanted to learn, and so he told him to come to that very spot next day, bringing his paints and brushes, and he would help him. The boy went more than once to his friend, and gradually he learned to paint, and later on in life became famous. He had watched an artist who loved his work, and who had learnt to do it well, and this created in the mind of the lad the desire to know more of the art of which he knew little. People who have learnt to appreciate what is fine and beautiful, as real art is, are always ready to teach those who are willing to learn.

(2) JESUS TEACHES THE DISCIPLES HOW TO PRAY

And thus it was that one day Jesus and His disciples were away from the crowd, and the disciples saw their Master doing one of the most beautiful of all things. *He was praying*, talking with His Heavenly Father. The attitude of Jesus was so reverent, His mind was so intent, that the disciples, like the boy in the story just told, felt impelled to wish they could do as the One they were watching. Thus when Jesus had finished, they exclaimed, "Lord, teach us to pray."

The men who made this request were devout Jews, and thus had prayed from childhood; but when they saw Jesus praying, they felt that their prayers were so unworthy, their knowledge of prayer so slight, that no longer could they be satisfied with any other lesson in prayer than that which they asked their Master to give.

The *example* of Jesus caused the *desire* in the minds of the disciples—this *desire* led them to ask, and their *asking* was rewarded by the prayer which we all know as the Lord's Prayer, the prayer of the Christian family—the Holy Catholic Church throughout the world—and which is in every Prayer-Book Service and which forms part of your Daily Prayer in school and at home.

It has been said that it was the example of Jesus which caused the disciples to wish to pray better, and if we study the Holy Gospels carefully, we shall see what an important part prayer played in the life of Jesus.

(3) THE PRAYERS OF JESUS

Many people, if asked what Jesus did when on this earth, will quickly state that He worked miracles and preached to people. They forget that much of His time was spent in prayer and worship.

If we read the Gospel according to St. Luke carefully, we

shall find ten actual prayers of Jesus, and in this and the other Gospels we find many references to His going away and praying quietly. We read of Jesus spending a whole night in prayer before choosing His disciples, and it may be right to state that never did He take up any important work without first placing it before His Heavenly Father in prayer.

He not only prayed in private. He joined in public prayer in the synagogue worship every Sabbath, thus setting us an example to join in worship with one's friends in church every Sunday and at special times, and in the appointed manner.

Some of you may remember hearing the story of Jesus sending out seventy of His disciples to teach the people, and when they returned full of joy and enthusiasm regarding the results of their mission, Jesus Himself rejoiced, and in a great prayer of praise thanked God for blessing the work His disciples had done. And on another occasion, when trial and temptation surrounded Jesus, He prayed, "Father, not My will, but Thine be done." In times of pleasure and sorrow Jesus prayed, and thus He teaches us that we should do the same.

(4) OUR OWN PRAYERS

Many people make a habit of praying only at certain times. It is quite right to form regular habits of prayer—regularity in this subject is as helpful as in any other, and the prayer-habit needs to be cultivated, just as we train ourselves in such habits of punctuality and cleanliness—but those who know what prayer really is (and Jesus did) will know that at any time and in any place they can talk with God.

Prayers are as necessary at the beginning of the day and at mid-day as they are at the end of the day, and it is a pity that children should grow up to think that prayers are only

to be said just before getting into bed at night. By praying only at night-time, children may think that they are specially liable to dangers during the hours of darkness; but surely it is the daytime when we are most likely to be tempted, and thus the day should be begun by prayer.

If we try to realise that God, our Heavenly Father, is always with us, we can always talk with Him. It may not always be convenient or easy to pray at home, and if this be the case, there is always the house of God ready for you (or at least it should be) and not far away, and in many churches there is a special part—the Children's Corner—where you can find special prayers for children, and interesting lessons on prayer.

It may be that you will find it difficult to speak with God, but do not be discouraged if this be so. You must learn how to pray as you learn to do all things that are worth doing in life, *i.e.* with patience. We shall never know all there is to know about anything, and this is particularly true of prayer; and if at times you do not know what to say, think of the disciples watching Jesus praying, and then say, "Lord, teach *me* to pray," and you will find that this prayer of yours, short though it is, will be answered.

It is not the long prayers which are always the best, the prayer of the disciples (used for the text) is one of the shortest known, and yet its answer is one of the greatest blessings the world has ever had. Without knowing it, the disciples not only brought a blessing on themselves, but on the whole world. They did not think for one moment that their prayer would bring the help it has brought, and still brings, to thousands of people, they did not know it would be used for ever; and neither do we know the power our prayers may have, or on whom they will bring blessing.

We sometimes hear people state that they cannot pray. Perhaps it would be more true to state that they are afraid to pray, or that they are too shy or nervous. We should

know that God is Love, and that His perfect Love casts out all fear, and thus we must cultivate in our lives the courage to speak to God freely. It may be that you will require help in prayer from some friend; if you really trust your teachers and clergy, you will ask them and they will help you. You may yourself be asked to help a younger brother or sister; but no one can give the help unless he or she has acquired the gift of prayer. Above all, try to pray, remembering that God will help those who help themselves.

(5) PRAYING BY LISTENING

But there are some people who make the mistake by thinking that, when praying, they must be talking all the time. You will remember a story of Samuel in his boyhood. He heard a voice and thought it was that of Eli, but was mistaken, and was told to lie down and if he heard the voice again he was to say, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." He did as he was told, and soon heard the voice of God calling him, and in reply Samuel asked God to speak to him—he was waiting to hear what God had to say.

And thus it may be often with ourselves. We should not always occupy all our time *saying* our prayers; but should train ourselves to listen to the Voice of God, Who has a message for us and work for us to do. In life our friends learn from what we say, and we must try to learn from what God has to say to us. It may be that in school days you will have regular daily prayers; but when you leave to take up what is hoped will be a busy and useful life, you will find great help in spending some time quietly with God, perhaps in His house of prayer, in order to know what He has to say to you. Try to be quiet for a while. Wait patiently, and use the prayer of Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Prayer may be difficult, but so many people make it more so because they forget the words of Jesus: "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and

it shall be opened unto you." If we ask, He will show us the way to pray. He will not solve our difficulties for us, but He will help us to find the way out. He will unlock the door which perhaps has barred our way along the path of prayer.

(6) PRAYERS AND DAILY LIFE

Not very long ago I was visiting a school, and was talking about prayer to some of the elder lads, and asked them to ask me questions about it. For a time no one spoke, and then one said, "To-morrow we are playing in the final match for the School's Football Shield. Is it right to ask God that we may win?" Before answering, I asked the boys which was the better of two things, *i.e.* to play a straight game or merely to win a victory. Their answer was, "To play the game," and mine was, "Then ask God to help you to do so, for that is the chief thing."

But prayer must not always take the form of asking—the Lord's Prayer begins with worship, it contains a prayer for forgiveness, as well as one for our spiritual and bodily needs; and at times it will be right for us to use special prayers of thanksgiving. Some of the most beautiful of the psalms were such prayers. A hymn sung beautifully and reverently may also be a great prayer, and before we leave this house of God we will sing together that beautiful hymn about prayer, "Lord, teach us how to pray aright."

Take courage when you pray—remember the great example of Jesus, seek the Will of God, not your own, remembering that our Lord and Master, in His hour of great difficulty, prayed, "Father, not my will, but Thine be done."

2. HELPS TO WORSHIP IN CHURCH—(I)

H. P. STATHAM

Lesson to be read by one of the children : Isaiah vi. 1-8.

(1) INTRODUCTION

I WANT to try to help you to-day about praying in church. I wonder how we are really getting on with it? You see, we should all agree that praying is one of the main things we come to church to do. And every time we come we kneel down and put our hands together and close our eyes and say words. But are we *praying*?

I have a feeling that very often we pray very badly. It all depends on what we are doing with our thoughts, and it is so very easy to kneel and shut our eyes and say words, and all the time not to be thinking of God at all.

Some of you may know the story of the King who tries to pray in Shakespeare's play of "Hamlet." We can see him doing it on the stage. He has a lovely prayer-desk to kneel at, and he lights the candles and kneels down and puts his hands together and tries to pray. But he just can't steady his thoughts on God. His mind is so full of other things, and in the end he gets up from his knees in despair and says:

"My words fly up, my thoughts remain below.
Words without thoughts never to Heaven go."

We don't want to fail like that. But it is difficult to keep our thoughts on God. The main reason is that we can't *see* God, and it is very hard to keep your thoughts fixed on someone you can't see.

Now let me see if I can help you.

(2) WHAT WE CAN DO WITH OUR KNEES

1. First of all there are things we can do *ourselves* which ought to help us quite a lot.

I wonder, for instance, whether you feel that it is easier to pray *standing up or kneeling down*? Which would you vote for? [Certainly many will vote in favour of kneeling.]

But *why* is kneeling a help? I suppose that if our King Edward were driving in a motor-car along the road outside this church this afternoon, he would very likely say, "Stop. I like the look of this church; I should like to look inside." And the next thing that would happen would be that we should see King Edward coming in through the door. If we recognised him, I suppose we should all stand up. But we should not kneel down. *He would come and kneel down with us*; for it is only before the King of kings that everybody kneels.

I remember when the Silver Jubilee of King George was held in London, how the King came driving up Ludgate Hill to St. Paul's with Queen Mary, and all the people who were listening-in could hear the cheering coming nearer and nearer, and the silver trumpets sounding; and then it all died away into silence, and we knew that the King had gone in to kneel in worship before the King of kings. And all the people who listened all the world over knew it too. That may help us to understand why the Psalmist says "O come let us worship and fall down and kneel."

(3) WHAT WE CAN DO WITH OUR HANDS

2. So far we have talked about what we can do with our *knees*. Is there anything that we can do with our *hands*? Very often people put their hands together when they pray. But why should we do that?

Of course you may tell me that if we keep our hands

together like that we can't fidget about with them; but there is a great deal more than this in the idea. A very famous artist, Albrecht Dürer, once painted a picture called "The Praying Hands." It is a very well-known picture, and it is often seen now on the walls of houses and on picture-postcards. It has nothing in it but just two hands pointing upwards, but everybody who looks at the picture is helped to pray, because the two hands are somehow like a little church spire raising our thoughts to God.

But there is more even than that in the idea of "hands together."

I wonder how many here have seen any of the great old castles, the ruins of which are found almost everywhere in England. They are reminders of a time when England was a very rough place to live in; most of the country was covered with woods full of wild beasts and sometimes of wilder men. Old farmhouses still often have moats around them, which go back to the time when the woods were full of wolves. But in the great castles there was safety, and sometimes the poor men who worked in the woods or the fields would come to the lord of the castle and say, "Things in the world outside are getting too dangerous. May I come into the castle, and bring my wife and family in too, and perhaps drive my sheep into the castle courtyard?" And the lord of the castle would say, "Yes, you may come in; but you must promise to be my 'liege man of life and limb'; you must promise to be loyal to me and do your part to help me to conquer all the evil that makes this world so hard for you." So the poor man would kneel down and put his hands together between his lord's knees, and say, "O Lord of the castle, I promise to be your liege man for life and limb."

And I sometimes think that when we kneel and put our hands together we are just like that—like people coming before a very great lord of a very great earth, and putting our hands between his knees and saying, "O Lord of the

earth, I will be faithful to you and help you to conquer every evil power."

(4) SEEING GOD'S GLORY

3. But putting our hands together is not the only thing we can do with them when we pray.

Very often I see people *putting their hands in front of their eyes*. Why is that a help? Of course it is quite true that, by doing this, we shut out anything that might make our thoughts wander. But I think there is more in it than that.

Let me tell you a story to show you what I mean.

A long time ago, in the city of Jerusalem, in the days of the great king Hezekiah, there lived a man whose name was Isaiah. (There is a book in the Bible called after him, and largely written by him.) He was a man of great importance—a statesman and councillor of the King, probably a prince by birth; but he liked to worship God, and often he used to go into the beautiful old temple which King Solomon had built in Jerusalem and listen to the Levite choirs singing their psalms; and perhaps he looked towards the farther end and saw the great curtain which hung before the Holy of Holies; and he knew that behind that curtain was the Ark of God, which had been carried by the Israelites through all their wanderings into their promised land; and over the ark golden angels with folded wings looked down on the mercy-seat where dwelt the Presence of God.

But one day as Isaiah came into the Temple he felt the ground tremble beneath his feet, and the great doorposts shook as he passed through them. And all of a sudden it seemed that the earthly temple had faded away and the great curtain was drawn aside. Instead of the Ark he saw the Throne of God Himself, and instead of the over-arching golden angels he saw the living angels of God hovering about His Throne, and instead of the Levite chant he

heard the angels answering each other in a perpetual hymn.

He could only look for a moment, for the sight sent him down on his face on the pavement; but in the moment that he looked he saw *something about the angels* that I want you to remember. Each one had six wings—not two, but six. With two wings they covered their feet—that is to say, they folded their wings beneath them to shut out the world below and to shut themselves in with God—with two wings they flew, keeping themselves up “around the throne of God”; and with two wings they covered their faces, for God’s glory was so wonderful that the angels could not look, but covered their faces with their folded wings.

And we who have no wings, coming into the presence of God in His holy temple here in this place, cover our eyes with our hands to help us to think of the glory of God.

(5) THE VISION OF HOLINESS

One last word. The song which Isaiah heard the angels sing has never since ceased to be sung here upon earth. Isaiah taught it to the people of his own day, and they began to sing the song in their worship, in the Temple at Jerusalem, and in the little synagogues, built many years afterwards, where they gathered each Sabbath day. When our Lord Jesus Christ came upon this earth, He went with his Mother to the synagogue in Nazareth, and joined in the same song; and when the Christian church began to worship God, it brought the same song into the Prayer-Book in two different places. (Does anyone know where they are?) If that is so, then we can join in that song now.

Therefore let us kneel, and remember that we are in the presence of the King of kings. Let us put our hands over our eyes to help us to think of the glory of God and the holy angels worshipping round His Throne. Let us remember

all the multitudes of worshipping people who for hundreds of years have joined in the angels' song and are joining in it still.

Now say these words of worship after me:—

“ Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God of Hosts!
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.
Glory be to Thee, O Lord most high.”

(Hymn: “ Bright the vision that delighted.”)

3. HELPS TO WORSHIP IN CHURCH—(II)

H. P. STATHAM

(I) INTRODUCTION

LAST time when we talked about worship, two things seemed plain: (1) That it is difficult to keep our thoughts steadily on God, because we cannot see Him, (2) that some things which we do ourselves may help us to prevent our thoughts from wandering. We kneel to help us to remember that we are in the presence of the King of kings. We put our hands together, like little church spires pointing to heaven; or, we use our hands to veil our faces like the angels in Isaiah's vision, who sang their song of "Holy, Holy," round the Throne of God.

Perhaps we might begin to-day where we left off last time. Let us kneel, and put our hands before our eyes, and think of the greatness and wonder and holiness of God.

Now say:—

"Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God of Hosts!
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.
Glory be to Thee, O Lord most high."

[All sit.]

(I) THE SECOND GLORY

Now to-day there is something more that I want to show you. We said last time that the angels covered their faces because of the glory of God.

But there are two sorts of glory. There is one kind of

glory which dazzles our eyes, like the glory of the sunshine; there is another kind of glory which dazzles our hearts. There is one kind of glory which makes us want to shout "Hurrah, how glorious!"; there is another kind of glory which is so big that we don't want to shout any more; we only want to kneel down and keep very still.

Let me tell you a story to show you what I mean.

Some years ago there was an exhibition in London of all the things connected with Captain Scott's great journey to the South Pole. They showed, for instance, all the beautiful pictures which were made by Dr. Wilson of the light of the Antarctic sunrise on the Polar ice, and the red glow of the great volcano Mount Erebus as it poured its smoke into the freezing air. They showed the splendid photographs which were taken by Dr. Ponting of their little ship, the *Terra Nova*, as she ploughed her way through the Arctic ice, and of all the strange beasts and birds that they met on their way.

But there was one room in that exhibition where it was noticed that everybody kept very still. There was a great silence.

If you had gone in there, I think you would have understood why. There was not very much in that room. Only a little empty tent, a row of empty tin cooking-pots, a rather worn-out-looking photographic camera. I think that was about all. But the little empty tent was the one in which had been found the dead bodies of Captain Scott, Dr. Wilson and Lieut. Bowers lying side by side under the snow.

Yet, as the people looked at it, they were thinking not of death, but of a great love which had expressed itself in death. They thought how all those five Englishmen who went to the South Pole practically laid down their lives for one another. They thought how Petty-Officer Evans had grown weaker and weaker, and the other men had stayed to help him until their own chances of escape had almost faded away. They thought how Captain Oates, realising

that he was growing weaker and was a fatal drag upon the others, had crawled out of that same little tent into a blizzard and laid down his life for his friends.

They thought of the last words of Captain Scott himself, written as he lay in that same little tent: "I do not regret this journey, which has shown that Englishmen can endure hardship, help one another, and meet death with as great a fortitude as ever in the past." Thus as they looked at the little tent they thought not of death, but of love and courage, which are stronger than death, and the wonder of it made them keep very still.

(2) THE GLORY OF THE CROSS

Now, as you sit here in church, can you see anything here before your own eyes which makes you think of a love and courage so great that it hushes you down and makes you want to keep very still? [Let suggestions be made. The Cross itself is the best suggestion of all. There will probably be several in sight.]

When we see a Cross, what does it make us think of?

Not only of death, but of love that expressed itself in death. Love that came down from heaven to be born in a manger. Love that reached out in pity to every lonely soul, to all whom the world passed by—lepers and outcasts and little lonely children. Love that hung on the Cross helping the thief by His side and praying for those who nailed Him there. Love which rose victorious beyond the grave and lives to help us now. As we look at the Cross, it makes us think of the greatest love of all, which is the love of God. And it makes us want to keep still.

That is why people are so silent when they come into church.

(3) THE WONDER OF GOD'S LOVE

Now we have thought of the Cross as the visible token of the love of Jesus. His love in His home, among His friends, among the lepers and the children, on the Cross, and beyond that right up to the time when, with hands stretched out in blessing, He passed from the sight of His disciples in the cloud over the hill.

Let us end by thinking of the love of Jesus still going on in heaven.

There is a kind of picture given us in the Book of Revelation—"Revelation" means the lifting of the veil, a sort of drawing up of a curtain to show us something, not all, of the meaning of things which generally are hidden from our eyes.

In that book of the "lifting of the veil" we find these words: "I saw and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne. The number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands; saying with a great voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing.' And every created thing which is in the heaven and on the earth and under the earth and in the sea heard I saying 'Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever'" (Rev. v. 11-13). Now let us try to join in that great worship.

Let us kneel, remembering that we are coming before the King of kings. Let us put our hands together in the presence of the Lord of lords. But this time we will not cover our eyes, but keep them open.

Look at a cross (whichever one you can see best). Think silently of the wonder of God's eternal love.

[Pause.]

Now say these words of worship after me:—

“ Praise be to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ,
For all the sufferings that Thou hast borne for us,
For all the blessings that Thou hast won for us.
O holy Lord Jesus,
Most merciful Redeemer,
Friend and Brother,
May we know Thee more clearly,
Love Thee more dearly,
And follow Thee more nearly.” Amen.

(Hymn: “ Crown Him with many crowns.”)

4. HANDS THAT LINK

DORIS DENT

(1) INTRODUCTION

I WANT to think with you about very big things. One of the most wonderful facts about ourselves (you and me, all the men and women in the world, all the boys and girls, all the children and babies) is that we are so very, very small and, at the same time, so very, very great. That sounds a contradiction, doesn't it? But let's think about it.

If you could look at a human brain, you would find that it was in appearance like a mass of little grey cells; yet those little grey cells are capable of grasping the most difficult and complicated problems; and what is even more marvellous, they have discovered the most tremendous facts about the vast universe which is all about us.

Now I want you to try to picture something which will need all your powers of imagination. This is not a comparison, because I could not get you to imagine anything big enough to be a comparison; but this is just to help you to get a tiny idea of the universe as it is.

Think of the ceiling of the most enormous room you have ever been in. Then, in one far-off dim corner of that ceiling imagine a tiny spot smaller than a pin's point. That tiny pin point is to represent this earth: the vast ceiling represents the universe.

Yet that tiny pin-point which represents this earth planet took millions of years in the making, and the history of people who have lived on this little earth-planet goes back thousands and thousands of years.

Are your heads beginning to whirl? I expect so, but I

want them to whirl a bit more before I have done. You and I are spiritual beings. What does that mean? To put it very simply, it means that we have an existence and an interest in two worlds—that is, in this tiny earth planet, and also in that part of the great universe which is quite close, but which cannot be seen by our little human eyes.

Now imagine a tiny fly drowning in a cup of milk. You rescue it, and place it upon your hand. I suppose it is conscious of a surface, possibly that surface looks like a great pinky-coloured rock. The fly has eyes, but it cannot see you. You are far too great and wonderful for its limited sight. But it was conscious of you, without understanding how or why, for you saved it. So there is a little being, an insect, with senses of sight and feeling, living in the insect world, and living in another greater world quite close to it, the human world, but a world which is really beyond its power of vision. Now isn't that beginning to make things clearer?

(2) THE UNSEEN WORLD

We, who inhabit this earth-planet, have our senses of sight and hearing and touch, and we know there is a great unseen world all round us. God is the Creator and King of that great unseen, as He is Creator and King of our little earth-world. There must be, we are sure, spiritual beings other than ourselves inhabiting other parts of the great universe, and there are those who have lived on the earth-planet and who have gone out of our limited sight. They are alive in the unseen world.

Now I think we begin to see the truth of what we said at the beginning: we are very, very small, and at the same time very, very great. This life on the tiny earth-planet is only the beginning of the great adventure, which will go on and on in the wonders of the unseen world.

There has been a purpose all through the history of the

people who have lived on earth through the thousands and thousands of years which divide you (boys and girls, who are listening) from the interesting people about whom the Old Testament stories tell you. We are linked with them: with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob in the same great adventure, the same purpose—to seek to know more about God, to try to know Him better.

In those long-ago times the people knew very little about Him, and they often made mistakes in their ideas and thoughts about Him, and about what He wanted them to do; but little by little they were getting to know Him better. Why was it so hard for them to get to know God? Perhaps one reason is because it is part of God's wonderful plan that the universe, within which our earth-world exists, should be unseen. Our bodily senses—hearing, seeing, touching—seem in a curious way to hide the other world from us, and yet in another way they link us with it. It is about one of these links that we are going to think: a link of which the hand is the sign—the link of touch.

(3) HANDS OF BLESSING

In the long ago story of that wonderful search for God, of the people of old, you have heard how Joseph became a great man in Egypt, how his brothers discovered who he was, and how they brought their old father, Jacob, to a joyful union with his beloved long-lost son.

Now we must look on again. Years have passed, Jacob is a very old man; he is blind, and so feeble that he feels that it won't be long before he will pass into the unseen world. There is something which he wants to do before he goes. Joseph has two little boys—jolly little fellows I expect they were; probably about your own age. Ephraim was the elder of the two, and in those days it

meant a great deal to be the elder, even if it were only by a year or so.

Joseph brings in the two little lads. The old man is lying on his bed, for he is weak. He hears footsteps and tries to raise himself. Joseph has his elder son, Ephraim, on his left side, the younger one, Manasseh, on his right. That seems strange. Can we guess the reason? He wants his old father to bless them, to give them a blessing from God and, for this, the link with that great unseen world will be through the use of his hands. Joseph wants the old man to put his right hand on the head of his elder boy, and his left on the head of the younger.

The old man cannot see which is which, so Joseph has carefully placed them in the correct position for Jacob's hands to rest on their heads. Now a strange thing happens! Joseph starts in surprise: "No, no, father, that is wrong," he cries, and tries to guide the old man's hands. For Jacob has deliberately crossed his hands, and has laid his left on the head of the elder son, and his right on the younger. But the old man will not alter the position. In some wonderful way guidance from God has come to him; it is God's Will that the leadership shall be for the younger boy, and the old man's hands are being used in blessing as the outward sign of this link with the unseen world.

And now we come to an interesting fact: the sign used all those thousands of years ago as the link with the unseen world is still used to-day. That brings those old times close to us, and it brings the unseen world close to us too.

Look at *your* hands, now while I speak. Turn them palms upwards: that is the giving attitude on our side. Now turn them the other way: that is the giving attitude on God's side.

(4) THE HANDS OF OUR LORD

On the walls of an old Swiss church there is a curious and wonderful picture. The artist has tried to paint a subject which it is *really* impossible for him to represent! He has tried to picture God the Father, and in the painting God the Father is shown in the act of throwing down a tiny Baby to the people on the waiting earth.

That was the biggest Giving that ever has been, or ever could be! "God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son." So we come to the greatest moment in time, when God Himself appeared on earth as a little human Baby, holding out tiny human hands.

This is the strongest link which links the visible to the unseen world.

Those human hands were used over and over again during the thirty-three years when the Son of God lived His human life on earth. They were used in healing and helping and blessing. But there is yet one more supreme moment when those holy hands were used.

You have seen, in picture, the Lord Jesus with His arms outstretched and His hands nailed. Should we think then that those hands could link His people to the unseen world?

There are some wonderful words which He Himself said: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." That is one great use for hands. With them we can draw things towards us. By His death upon the Cross, our Lord drew us back to God the Father.

And now, what about hands to-day? Your hands; other people's hands. Do *they* link, now, with the unseen world?

Is there another way in which you can put your hands? Will you put your palms together?

There is a beautiful picture which may be familiar to you. It is called "Praying Hands." "Every picture tells a

story." You've seen those words in an advertisement, haven't you? And this picture, of those two hands palm to palm, tells a tale. It tells a tale of one of the strongest links of all, with the unseen world.

(5) PRAYING HANDS

Tennyson, the poet Laureate in Queen Victoria's reign wrote this in one of his poems

" More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.
For what are men better than sheep or goats if,
Knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friends? "

I expect you understand the words quite well, but we will put them into simple language to make quite sure. They mean that prayer is a *real* power—in some wonderful way which we cannot understand, prayer actually helps to link the people on this earth-world with God, draws them closer to Him and helps to draw their wills into line with His Will. And so our talking to God results in more wonderful things than we could ever dream of—and it is just this power of prayer which makes us different from the animals, for they cannot talk to God.

When I was thinking about this talk with you, and how we should be considering " hands " as a link, I was wishing I could find a story which would help us to remember. It was some months ago, back in the winter-time, and that very week there was a true story in the paper. It happened in France. There had been skating on a frozen lake, and all at once the ice gave way and numbers of skaters, chiefly children, were thrown into the icy water. It would not have been safe to walk across the ice to help them. What could be done? The rescuers lay flat, joined hands and made a living chain. The children were clinging to the edges of the ice, and they were, one by one, drawn to safety. Hands linked making a living chain!

And this is how Tennyson ended his poem :

“ And so the whole round earth is, every way,
Bound with gold chains about the Feet of God.”

He meant the chains of prayer, of which we see the outward sign in hands, palm to palm, lifted up to God. That is our part.

When Jacob used his hands, he was acting for God. There are those now whom God uses to act for Him. We call them His ministers, and often they use an outward sign picturing the link with the unseen world. And with that sign there is a happening! Through “ the laying-on of hands ” comes a blessing—a blessing from God, from the unseen world. They say : “ The blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, be with you and remain with you always.”

Once more put your hands together palm to palm. Now will you lift them up, and let us try to get a mind picture?

See this little earth-world, and the people on it lifting up “ praying hands,” talking to the Lord Jesus. Then picture Him with His hands, hands marked with nail-prints, stretched out, palms downwards, in blessing, and in giving. Now let us see the hands linked—His hands linked with the human hands raised in prayer! So the great unseen world is joined with our little earth-world, and you can understand the poet's words :

“ And so the whole round earth is, every way,
Bound with gold chains about the Feet of God.”

Will you try to remember that, when you yourselves talk to our Lord in prayer—remember that you are helping to strengthen the link which unites the world we can see, this earth we live on, with the Great Unseen?

(6) THE ADVENTURE OF KEEPING ON

I want your prayer-life to be the most real, the most important part of your whole life. Let us get away entirely from the dull sounding words "Saying my prayers," and think instead of the glorious adventure of talking with our Lord, getting to know Him better, listening to Him, telling Him all the things which interest us: our sports, our games, our lessons, our fun, our friendships; all the jolly things which happen—yes, and the things which go wrong too; talking them over with Him, and telling Him how sorry we are when we have hurt Him.

I should advise you to get that lovely picture, "Praying Hands." Put it up in your room in your Prayer Corner (which I hope you've got) and let it remind you always of that wonderful and unbreakable link which we have with the unseen world: that wonderful, unbreakable link which we have with our Lord Himself, and which I hope all through your lives you will use more and more.

It will not always be easy. We should not be worth much if we looked always for an easy way. You remember the old rhyme: "Jack and Jill went *up* the hill." That old rhyme is a parable of our life: it is always on and up.

So, Jacks and Jills on God's Highway, never be afraid of difficulties on the upward climb, for there are the hands of One Who has passed over the same uphill road held out to you, to give you strength, and to draw you up. Hold out your hands and take hold of His, and let Him help you, and then *always keep on keeping on.*

5. "LISTENING IN"

J. D. STEWART

Speak, Lord ; for Thy servant heareth.—1 Samuel iii. 9.

(1) INTRODUCTION

HAVE you ever noticed how interested our Lord Jesus Christ was in *ordinary things*: how they possessed a peculiar fascination for Him?

He would thoughtfully watch the beauty of wild flowers, and compare it in His mind with the gorgeousness of King Solomon's royal robes. He would watch the birds, and marvel at the way they were all fed. He would watch children at their games as well as men and women at their work.

And if we seek the reason of our Lord's interest in ordinary things and in ordinary persons, it was because to Him they offered signs of the Heavenly Father's presence, of His power and love and ordering.

If Jesus were living on earth in our day, I feel there is no doubt that He would have been interested in the things which are interesting to us: He would wish us to take similar notice, and treasure the thoughts which they suggest to us about God, and to learn spiritual lessons from every-day things and every-day happenings.

He would have looked up at an aeroplane droning overhead; He would have listened to voices over the telephone; He would have been fascinated with the marvels of the "wireless." He would have taught us to look out for signs of the Heavenly Father's presence and power and love in the familiar things of *our* lives.

From the many interesting inventions of our day I wish to single out for special consideration, the “ portable wireless set ” familiar to so many of you. This will introduce us at once to our subject which is “ Listening in.”

(2) “ LISTENING IN ”

Probably every one of you has listened in at one time or another, and you may even be fortunate enough to possess a wireless set of your own.

This wonderful invention has enabled you to “ listen in ” to those vivid stories during the “ Children’s Hour ”; or to those teachers who succeed in making history, geography or nature study of living interest to a great audience of listening boys and girls.

The question I am anxious to put to you is this. Have you ever seriously thought that “ listening in ” to God’s Voice is a real part of your prayer life? You often speak to God in your prayer; but do you regularly and consciously and expectantly “ listen in ” to God speaking to *you* ?

A very beautiful and suggestive description of prayer-life is “ Friendship with God.” I have no need to tell you that “ listening ” is a very precious part of friendship. Listening is a very precious part of our friendship with God.

In church, the altar-desk, the lectern, the pulpit are reminders that “ listening ” is included in nearly all forms of public worship. It must form part of your private worship as well. There must be periods of quiet when, instead of speaking to your Divine Friend, you will “ listen in ” for Him to speak to you. The prayer of the child Samuel will be on your lips and in your heart as you do so: “ Speak, Lord; for Thy servant is *listening*.”

You will remember that God *did* answer Samuel’s prayer: for the child Samuel heard God speaking to him. And you may hear God speaking to you: so that you will be able to

say with Samuel and the great prophets of the Old Testament, "The word of the Lord came unto *me*."

The period immediately before the call of Samuel was a very sad one in the history of God's people. In the words of a later prophet (Amos viii. 11), there was "a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, *but of hearing the words of the Lord*," for we read in 1 Samuel iii. 1, "And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days." . . . In this verse the word "precious" means "scarce."

The fault was surely with God's people. They had become so occupied with their own thoughts and plans that God was forgotten. They had ceased to take pains about listening for His voice; their ears had grown "dull of hearing."

This teaches us a valuable lesson about our "listening in" to the voice of God. *We must have taken some pains about our preparation.*

If we are to hear clearly and accurately by means of our wireless set we must make certain careful preparation, otherwise the message will not reach us. The fault will not be with the Broadcasting Centre. The sounds will be coming "on the air," but we shall be deaf to them. We might even be foolish enough to believe that the Centre had been closed down. Yet the fault will lie with us.

Let us learn from our wireless set what kind of preparation we must make for hearing the voice of our Heavenly Father speaking to the heart and conscience of His child.

This preparation is threefold:—

- i. We must turn our set in the right direction.
- ii. We must keep our battery charged.
- iii. We must "tune in" accurately to the Broadcasting Centre.

1. *Right Direction.*

Now, we will suppose you have decided to listen in to a Radio play to be broadcast during the Children's Hour, and which promises to be interesting and exciting. Just before 5.15 p.m. you will turn your “ set ” in the direction (we will say) of the Regional Broadcasting Centre.

At this point we may ask, Why was little Samuel able to hear the voice of God calling him through the prevailing silence. “ The Lord called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I ” (1 Samuel iii. 4).

I believe we shall find the answer in such a text as “ Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod ” (1 Samuel ii. 18) or, “ The child Samuel grew before the Lord ” (1 Samuel ii. 21).

Is not this the answer to our question? The child Samuel was able to hear the voice of God calling him *because his life was turned in the right direction*. Samuel grew up and ministered *before the Lord*.

We receive the impression that Samuel gave God's will a first place in his daily plans: it was to such a one that God could speak. And speak not once but often; for Samuel again and again received messages from God and shared them with His people. “ And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord ” (1 Samuel iii. 20, 21).

This is not a too difficult lesson for you to learn, is it? It is to make your plans for your daily work and recreation in the spirit of Saul of Tarsus, who on the great day of his conversion cried, “ Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? ”

There is a very inspiring petition in the Prayer-Book which I am sure you will care to use, perhaps every day. You will find this petition in Morning Prayer included in the Third Collect, for Grace.

These are the words:

“O Lord our Heavenly Father, Almighty and Everlasting God, Who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day . . . Grant that all our doings may be ordered by Thy governance, to do always that is righteous in Thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

2. *A Charged Battery.*

How disappointing it is when we are listening in to the exciting conclusion of (say) a Cup Final football match with ten more minutes of play and then . . . we experience a “fade out.” We had forgotten to charge the battery. A little more care about the preparation, and all would have been well.

Here there is an interesting and important point to be noticed. The unseen power in the battery, which enables us to listen in, is electricity. The power used by the Broadcasting Centre to reach us is electricity too. The unseen power within us which enables us to hear and understand God's voice in our heart and conscience is the power of the Holy Spirit. And when God speaks to us, He speaks to us by this same Holy Spirit.

When we are careless about our prayers, the Holy Spirit is less able to show us the truth of God's will for us.

We, as it were, charge our spiritual battery when we pray to the Holy Spirit for grace and guidance, when we offer to God our public and private worship.

It is a very encouraging thought that the same Holy Spirit who, in His love, is filled with the desire to bring us messages from God, is filled also with the desire to help us to hear and understand them. The Holy Spirit is waiting for us to seek the help which He is so ready to give.

In confidence, then, we may pray some such prayer to God the Holy Spirit as this:—

O Holy Spirit, the Way Leader into all the truth, teach me to know my Heavenly Father's will for me, and fill me with the spirit of obedience.

3. *Tuned In.*

When we have turned our “set” in the right direction; when we have been careful about the charging of our battery, there still remains the “tuning in” to be attended to.

Having selected the wave-length, we proceed to bring our “set” into tune with, we might almost say into *sympathy* with, that wave-length.

And it is not always an easy task to separate our desired wave-length from others, and we persevere until we have done so.

This means that we must try very hard to bring the thoughts of our minds and the desires of our hearts into tune with our Heavenly Father's thoughts and desires.

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts,” cried the prophet in the later history of God's people.

And then he proceeded to deliver a message he had received from God: “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah lv. 7, 9).

Have you ever considered the importance of your thoughts? All we say and all we do are the result of thoughts. The wonderful inventions of our age which have already been mentioned were thoughts first.

St. Paul realised the importance of our thought-life when he wrote that magnificent passage to the Philippians:

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are

just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians iv. 8).

He knew the living connection between thought and behaviour and character.

St. Paul has, in these inspired words, rightly and most beautifully described the thoughts of the mind in tune or in sympathy with the mind of God.

To the mind with such an ideal as this for its thinking God can reveal the messages of His love.

The separating of our thoughts from evil or dangerous thoughts, like the separating of our wave-length from others requires persevering endeavour. In the place of every wrong thought we must try by God's help to make a home in our mind for the corresponding good thought.

By intentionally interesting ourselves in the best kind of stories, the best kind of pictures, the best kind of conversations we shall be encouraging, so to speak, the best kind of thought-plants to flourish in our mind-garden to God's Glory and our own happiness.

(3) CONCLUSION

So with our lives rightly directed, with care given to our prayers, with our thoughts increasingly in tune with God's thoughts, we shall be making the best preparation we can for listening in to God's voice.

God will speak to us through words of parents, clergy and teachers; God will speak to us through the words of Holy Scripture; God will speak to us in the secret place of our own heart, and our heart "will burn within us."

6. INTERCESSION

A. L. WOODARD

(On the Sunday before the use of the subject notice is given that children will bring to church next Sunday their *own Prayer-Books*,* and will be ready to show how they are growing in that part which is kept for prayers for other people.)

Lesson : St. Luke xxii. 24-32.

Text : *I have prayed for thee.*—St. Luke xxii. 32.

(1) INTRODUCTION

You will remember that our Lord Jesus Christ very often asked God the Father to bless His friends. His prayers were answered in full measure. St. Peter had many difficult lessons to learn in life. He loved our Lord. He was hurt by any suggestion that he was not His friend (St. John xxi. 17). But St. Peter had many human faults and weaknesses. It may well be that he was slow to understand the teaching of our Lord. After every failure he returned by the grace of God to his loyalty, strengthened by experience. He became both willing and able to give himself wholly in service to Jesus. It is during one of these times of conflict towards a fuller life that our Lord declares to St. Peter both his liability to temptation and our Lord's own care for him in prayer. "I have prayed for thee."

* In the church for which this address was prepared there is "Our Prayer-Book," a loose-leaved book in the Children's Corner in which are placed, from time to time, the best examples of the different kinds of prayer. As contributory to this common book, each child is encouraged to make his own prayer-book by collecting, under guidance, prayers and pictures which appeal to him.

St. John tells us of the most wonderful prayer for other people uttered by our Lord. You can read it through, and you should read it slowly and carefully, in the seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel. Perhaps the older children amongst you will find the verses which concern the welfare of other people. Notice what is asked of the Father (verses 9, 11, 15, 17, 20 and 21).

You will remember that our Lord carried into His own life the prayers He offered. Can you give instances? (*e.g.* St. Luke xxiii. 34 for our Lord's attitude on the Cross expressed throughout the spirit of that forgiveness which He comes to achieve and proclaim).

(2) INTERCESSION

All prayer for other people is called intercession

That long word means a coming between two people to obtain help for one of them who is in need, whether he knows it or not. Sometimes an older brother or sister will beg a father to be kind and forgiving to a younger member of the family who has been naughty. The intercessor is called also a *mediator*. An earthly father may be angry with the one who in this way *comes between* him and another child. The work of a mediator is good and noble, but may be very difficult and painful.

Now you can see how it is that our Lord Jesus Christ is Intercessor and Mediator for us to our heavenly Father. He is always thinking of us, and praying to the Father for us (Hebrews vii. 25). It is as "members of Christ" that we come to our Father with all our prayers for the good which we desire for our friends.

[This address may be divided up for three or more occasions, and the first part might close here with an illustration from personal and local experience, or from the Bible.]

(3) THE INTERCESSOR

“We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous” (1 John ii. 1). [All say and learn the text.]

If a naughty boy, who was wilfully and intentionally naughty, came to his father and asked a favour for a younger brother, what would his father say to him? [Several answers will be given which afford an opportunity for proceeding with the address.]

You see, then, that the intercessor must be *worthy* himself if he is to *make requests*. You will feel that you are never good enough to come to the Father in heaven on behalf of other people. That is quite true. Turn again to our Lord Jesus Christ. He is without sin. He comes to the Father for us. We are “members of Christ.” We come with our intercessions to the Father with Christ. It is very important to remember that we never come to the Father in our own strength, or apart from our Lord Jesus Christ. We are not worthy to make our requests to the Father, however good we may seem to be. Jesus is worthy to make *all* requests. (“He through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without fault to God”—Hebrews ix. 14. See Hebrews x. 14; 2 Corinthians v. 21 and context.)

(4) THE FRIENDS OF THE INTERCESSOR (St. John x. 15, 16)

Before we think of the *requests* we are to make to God for other people, we must ask ourselves who these people are for whom we are to pray.

Can you remember for whom you have asked God’s blessing every day since you were very small? [Father, mother, brothers and sisters.] We begin with our friends at home. Do you pray for anyone else? [Teachers, clergy, etc.] What about the boys and girls with you at school—

those with whom you find it sometimes difficult to play, or to whom you are disinclined to speak much?

Have you noticed *in the Church services* any intercession for people by name? [The King, the Bishop, those who are sick,* travellers, our own people from the parish who have gone to live overseas.]

You must be careful not to mention too many names at one time. Each person must be presented to God with your thoughtful request. There are older men and women who have so many people to think of that they have to get up earlier and earlier to intercede for them. [Give examples, and cf. the guilds of intercessors who pray all night for those who do not pray for themselves.]

Your "friends" are all those whom the Lord Jesus counts as His friends. You cannot possibly name them all. Do not strain at this work beyond the movement of the Spirit in you. But year by year practise more regularly and thoughtfully the making of your requests for all the people who come into your world of experience.

This is the greatest work you can do for other people so long as you live according to your prayers for them. If you are tempted to say unkind, even if true, things about another, go to God with your intercession for your friend. When you are powerless to help one in sin or suffering, carry him to God in prayer.

[This section may include illustrations from the Bible, *e.g.* Exodus xxviii. 12 and 29 and context.]

"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He is the propitiation for our sins."

Some of you have heard those words in the Service of

* In this church the sick and those in sorrow are mentioned by name, and not only the mortally sick. Most of them recover their health. The children are familiar specially with prayer for children known to them in hospital, etc.

Holy Communion. Can anyone complete the sentence as it is written in 1 John ii. 2? [All say and learn 1 John ii. 1 and 2.] *Missionary* Intercession is an important part of our work with Christ.

(5) THE INTERCESSOR AND HIS REQUESTS

(St. Matthew vii. 7, 8)

There are blessings which God delights to give. Many of them are given apart from anything we have done to deserve them. People came to Jesus Christ and asked Him for the kind of help which they knew He could give to their children or others. They interceded with Him for them. [Illustrate e.g. St. Matthew xv. 21-28; St. Luke viii. 41-42; St. Luke ix. 37-42.] The help which He gives and the way in which He gives it show us what He desires to give. From the gifts of our Lord Jesus Christ we learn of the kind of blessings for which we can ask our Father when thinking of our friends.

We shall understand this as we grow older. The more we ask, and the more carefully we think about our requests, the better shall we discover what God delights to give. In this way we shall find out what is the *real good* for those for whom we pray. What seems to be wrong with the verse in the National Anthem which begins

“O Lord our God, arise,
Scatter our enemies”?

All this work will need patience, and long practice. Although sometimes we can tell clearly what people around us want from God, we must remember that it is far more important to lay their needs before our Father, and to leave Him to supply them in His own way, than to tell God how we think they should be supplied. [Illustrate e.g. St. Luke v. 18-25.]

As we desire to help others, so remember, when we have

friends who love our Lord Jesus Christ, we should ask them *to help us* by their intercession. We shall gain many blessings by doing this.

St. Paul used to ask people to pray for him and his work. [See *e.g.* Ephesians vi. 18, 19.]

On what kind of occasions would you ask your greatest friends to pray for you?

(6) THE INTERCESSION SERVICE

Do you remember services or prayers in the Book of Common Prayer which are intercessory? [Litany, etc.] We have learnt that Jesus Christ is the Mediator who makes intercession for us at all times. He is as it were a living intercession, ever holding up in His life our needs before the Father. All *Christian* prayer is offered by us as members of Christ. We come to God as children who have been united with Christ in our Baptism. It is not only when we are together in church that we intercede as members of the Church. Always we offer our prayers in union with our Lord. Whenever the Holy Communion is celebrated the whole Church is pleading with the Father through and with our Lord Jesus Christ for those greatest of all blessings which He has made available for us. Our intercession at such times is not only as full, but as inclusive of all mankind, as the Love of our Saviour. Those of you who are confirmed will remember the greatness of this opportunity.

(Hymns A. & M. 322, verse 3; 553, verses 2 and 3.)

III. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE



1. THE DOOR OF OUR LIPS

C. R. MONTGOMERY

Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth ; and keep the door of my lips.—Psalm cxli. 3.

(1) INTRODUCTION

I SUGGEST to you young people that, if you do not already know this text, you should learn it by heart and use it in your prayers, both morning and evening. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth ; and keep the door of my lips." It is very easy to understand, isn't it? And it is very important indeed.

These mouths of ours are used for so much ! Have you ever heard your mouth described as two folding doors which meet in the middle? And these folding doors, or rather our lips, are opened when we take in food. That is very important, because food is entirely necessary to enable us to live. But I want to talk to you especially about another use we have for our mouths.

We open our mouths to speak, and we have got, as Christians, to be very careful as to the words we allow to go out of our mouths. In other words, we must be careful when we speak. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth ; and keep the door of my lips." That is the prayer we should all use. Before most of you were born, there used to be a saying, "Children should be seen and not heard." Thank God that to-day that kind of doctrine is over and done with, and young people are allowed, as they should be, to express themselves, without being kept in the background and

snubbed whenever they express an opinion. At the same time, although you do not have to be suppressed in the way that your fathers and mothers were when they were children, it is even more important that you should set a guard on the words which go out of your mouths.

Now, there are many reasons why this is so, and I should like to give you three reasons and ask you to remember them. (1) You can never get back what goes out; (2) the words we use show what we are like; (3) because God tells us.

(1) *The Feathers at the Cross-roads.*

You can never get back what goes out. Have you ever heard the story of the feathers at the four cross-roads? There was once a king who gave a great feast to all his knights who had returned from his wars. The day before the banquet one of the greatest of his knights had a fall from his horse, and was so badly injured that it was thought he could never recover, and of course he could not attend the banquet. The king thought that this would cast a gloom over the feast, but he was surprised to find that it made no difference at all to the gaiety of the knights, and no one seemed to miss the chief.

So the king asked them the reason of this. "Sire," they said, "we do not feel the loss of our chief very much, because when he is with us we fear the power of his lashing, sarcastic tongue, and we are always afraid of what he is going to say next."

This caused the king to think a great deal, and when, as it happened, the knight recovered and became well again, he sent for him and ordered him to fetch his horse and come for a ride with the king. He was also to be particularly careful to bring with him a large sack full of feathers. The knight was much mystified, but naturally he obeyed the king's commands, and in due time they set off on horse-

back, the knight carrying with him the sack of feathers. When they reached a place four miles out in the country they found cross-roads there. The king thereupon ordered the knight to get down off his horse and empty the feathers out on to the road. Then they turned their horses and rode back again. The king did not explain the rather curious proceeding and the knight did not dare to ask.

The next day the king sent for the knight again and told him to bring the horse and the empty sack with him. Again they rode out to the place four miles out where the cross-roads met. Then the king ordered the knight to dismount and to refill the sack with the feathers he had emptied out the day before! It is not difficult to guess what had happened—the feathers had all blown away.

Then the king said: "I did this with a purpose. The feathers were meant to represent your words. You cannot get them back, and in your case your words do a great deal of harm, and cause much sorrow."

Many are the words which come from *our* lips, but we cannot draw them in again. What we can do is to be careful. That angry and hasty word we used the other day—the pain we caused our friend, or our parents, or anyone at all, by what we said. Perhaps we did not think very much before we said it.

Do you remember the story of King Herod and John the Baptist? Herod promised the girl Salome, in a rash moment, that he would give her anything at all she asked. She asked for the head of John the Baptist. Herod even then could have put right his mistake, for two wrongs cannot make a right; but the point I want to make is that Herod used rash words, without thinking.

(2) *Words at Home.*

The words we use show what we are like. Now, that should make us all think. If we are continually saying

things and using words which are wrong, it means that there is something wrong with us. And we must pray to God to help us to put the wrong right. You know, very often we see people as they really are in their own homes. Because at home we are more natural and at ease, not always on our best behaviour. Are we, then, cross and irritable when we are at home? Are we impatient? Do we say things we ought not to, and which we should *not* say if we thought about it? "Set a watch, O Lord, upon my mouth; and keep the door of my lips."

(3) *God's Bidding.*

This is the most important of all. *Because God tells us.* Where does He tell us? In so many places. Here are some: "Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord Thy God in vain." "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." Remember if you hurt others by your words you are also breaking the sixth commandment: "Thou shalt do no murder." It is easy to find more examples of this third reason.

(2) TWO SAFEGUARDS

Now I have given you three reasons why we should set a watch on our words, and I want you to remember them. I am also going to give you two safeguards.

(1) Only let good words, coming from good thoughts, come out of your mouth, and let so many of them come that there will be no room for bad ones. That is obvious, isn't it?

(2) The second safeguard is. Pray to God about it. Take more trouble with your prayers.

I have no doubt that many boys and girls are still saying the same prayers that their mothers taught them when they used to kneel at their mothers' knees. And these prayers are still said, without any variation, because they have not thought about it enough. These boys and girls have not

realised that as you grow older your prayers must alter—you must get away from the baby language of childhood and speak to God more in your own words.

And so again I suggest that you use the words of this text in your own prayers; “Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; and keep the door of my lips.” Why? Because you can never get back what goes out. Because the words we use show what we are like. Because God tells us to. And remember the safeguards. Only let good words come out—so many of them that there will be no room for bad ones. And also pray to God that He will help you.

2. IN THE PATH OF THE SUN

MISSIONARY

H. P. THOMPSON

From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name is great among the Gentiles : and in every place incense is offered unto my name, and a pure offering.—Malachi i. 11.

(1) THE WIRELESS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

WHAT a wonderful thing the “wireless” is! If you have a good set, you can tune it in and pick up voices and music from all over the world. Or sometimes the B.B.C. relays speakers or concerts from far-off places—you hear an orchestra playing in Vienna, or President Roosevelt talking in Washington.

But the most wonderful moment has usually come on Christmas afternoon, for then the B.B.C. has gathered in, within half an hour, the whole Empire, to speak to its king, and then to listen to him. One after another the voices come, speaking or singing, from all over the world. Perhaps Scotland or Wales first, then India, then Canada, then (a little hard to hear) New Zealand or Australia, then South Africa, and the West Indies, and Singapore, and a ship in the Suez Canal—each in turn speaks its words of greeting to fellow-members of the Empire, and of respect to its king.

Then comes the moment for which all are waiting: and the king speaks to them all. It must have been very wonderful for King George to know how they all honoured and loved him. He felt that he could call himself the “father” of the great family of nations all round the world.

(2) THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH ON CHRISTMAS DAY

But another thing of rather the same kind, and even more wonderful, happens on every Christmas Day, and all through the day. Christmas Day is the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ, and on it Christians all over the world remember how the angel came long ago to the shepherds watching their flocks by night, and gave them God's message: "Unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord"—and with the shepherds they go to worship at the manger, and praise God for His love shown in Jesus Christ.

If you could come with the sunrise of Christmas morning, and travel round the earth from east to west, waking each country in turn, you would hear people after people in land after land offering their Christmas worship, in many tongues, but all with the same thoughts and the same gladness.

Where would it begin? Each day starts on a line drawn down the Pacific Ocean, exactly on the other side of the world from Greenwich. So the first people to whom Christmas Day comes are the islanders of Polynesia, in Tonga or Fiji. Then New Zealand will take up its turn, and Australia; and New Guinea and Borneo; and Japan and China up in the north—and then Singapore, and India; and soon Africa will join in; and we shall wake up when West Africa does, and our voices will rise with theirs; and after us, South America and the West Indies and Canada; and the last will be those far away on the British Columbian coast, and up in the wilds of Alaska.

How wonderful to think of the Christmas worship going on all day long, all round the world! And we take our part in it when our turn comes.

(3) CHRISTMAS WORSHIP IN OTHER LANDS

It will help you to think of it if you hear just how Christmas worship is offered in some of these other places. Here are some true descriptions.

(1) It is near midnight in Levuka, on the Fiji Islands. A fine stone church stands near the sea-shore, fringed with palms. There has been Evensong on Christmas Eve, for many of the Europeans in the town; now, half an hour before midnight, comes a stream of tall, dark men and women with curiously stiff curled hair—Solomon Islanders, a Melanesian people who have settled in Levuka to work in the cotton and sugar fields. They go into church and sing Christmas Carols in their Fijian tongue, with sweet voices such as island people have. Midnight strikes, and the Eucharist begins, sung simply by all the congregation. It is the first Christmas Service of the whole Anglican Communion: they know that they are starting a great girdle of worship of the Christ Child that will pass all round the earth.

(2) Now fly on to India. At Pak Bara, in northern India, the Indian Christians have a church built in Indian style: it has no roof, except a dome over the sanctuary and altar; the nave, where the congregation gathers, is open to the sky; the floor is of earth, covered with matting; the walls enclosing it have arches, with just a narrow colonnade.

They begin their Christmas Eucharist very early in the morning, while it is still dark. But hundreds of tiny lamps like saucers are lighted all round the arches and pillars, throwing a soft light below. The girls from the mission school come down in procession, singing Indian hymns, accompanied by drums; with the rest, they fill the church. Then the priest robes and goes to the altar; and then leads the whole congregation out through the west door, and they go in procession round the church, singing the Christmas

hymns. Nearly all are Indians, and among them are mothers with babies and tiny children, so they walk slowly; but they sing, so that everybody may know that they are happy on Christmas Day. Then they come back into the church, beautiful in its soft light, and with the candles on the altar.

It is still dark; and the server holds a lantern so that the priest may read the service from his book. But then a wonderful thing happens. In India the sun rises suddenly, and dawn breaks in an instant. Just as the priest comes to the great words of the Gospel, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," the sun rises, and the whole roofless church is filled with its light. Truly it makes them feel the joy that Christ has brought, coming to be the Light of the World.

(3) Now come to quite another country—South Africa. There it is midsummer, while it is our mid-winter. In from distant villages come the African Christians to the churches at the mission stations; some of them come twenty or forty or even sixty miles, walking or riding in lumbering ox-carts. Here is the little stone church at Motito; and round it the people have camped in the open, lying near their wagons, and cooking their food over open fires. Their Christmas Eucharist is to be at midnight; before it, they make their confession to the priest, and from sunset they all fast. Then at midnight they gather round the church, carrying flaming torches: the choir with banners and lights goes in front, and they march round the church, singing in their African language (Sechuana), "O come, all ye faithful." Then they enter the church. It is all dark, except for the blaze of candles on the altar. The nave is filled with the dark crowd of people, closely packed. They join reverently and happily in the worship, and a hundred make their Christmas Communion. When it is over they go quietly back to their camps; and at half-past nine they all

gather again for a great Choral Eucharist of Christmas praise.

(4) One more picture. We will go right away into northern Canada, where scattered English settlers are living up in the Swan River district. From St. Faith's, Swan River, some English ladies work as the Bishop's Messengers among them, and a priest travels from place to place, giving them the sacraments.

This morning he is going out with one of the Messengers to give their Christmas Communion to a group of settlers twelve miles from St. Faith's. But the ground is covered deep with snow, and the cold is intense—thirty-five degrees below zero! They start out in a "caboose," a sort of covered sledge, with a small stove inside to keep them from freezing. The road is buried deep in snow, and only the line of telegraph posts guides them. It takes three and a half hours to cover the twelve miles. At last, very late, they reach the wooden shack where the service is to be. Nineteen people are waiting there, huddled round a stove. "We knew you would get here somehow," they say. The room is prepared, but they have to wait, for the wine and water are frozen solid, and must be thawed. Then the little gathering hold their Christmas Eucharist, and eight make their Communion. Many have come two or three miles through the snow for it: for one couple it is their first opportunity of Holy Communion during the whole eight years they have been in Canada.

So let us picture to ourselves the Christmas worship, going on in land after land, among all peoples, in all tongues, "from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same."

(4) THE FATHER'S MESSAGE

But (like the British people and the king) they come not only to worship, but to hear a message: the Christmas

message of the angel. Think how that will be given to all, read out from the Bible—and in more than seven hundred different languages! For to-day, so widespread is the Church, parts of the Bible have been translated into more than seven hundred languages, so that all may hear its message in their own tongue. Think, then, of the Christmas message from God to His great family.

“Unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”

The same words, in seven hundred languages.

For to all Christ came to be the Saviour. To all He came to tell of God their Father and His love.

And in all the seven hundred languages they join with us in the one prayer of God's family:

“Our Father, which art in heaven . . .”

(5) THE GREAT FAMILY

We have been thinking of Christmas Day; but it is true of every Sunday; indeed, of every day. “From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same,” without a stop, the Church all round the world brings its worship to God, its praises and its prayers. God is “our Father” to them all, as well as to us. He loves them all, just as He loves us. We are all one great family, God's children: one world-wide Church.

There are many who do not yet know God their Father; we must tell them. There are many who have known, but have forgotten; we must bring them back into the family.

What can we do now, as a reminder of what we have learnt to-day? Here are two suggestions:

(1) Whenever we meet here in church to praise and to pray, let us stop at the beginning, and keep quiet for a moment, and think of those who have been worshipping before we began, and those who will go on after we have

finished, and so remember that we are taking our part in a great world-wide worship, in many languages, which never stops.

(2) Often at our own prayers, when we say the Lord's prayer, say "Our Father, which art in heaven"—and then stop, and remember the great family of all races who say the same prayer in seven hundred other languages, and then say, thinking of them;

"Hallowed be Thy Name:
Thy Kingdom come."

So we shall pray for the missionary work of the Church, that all God's children may know and love His Name, and make Him their King.

[The illustrations in § 3 are taken (1) from *Levuka Days*, S.P.G., 1s.; (2) and (3) from *Worship in Other Lands*, S.P.G., 2s. 6d.; (4) from *The Eternal Purpose*, S.P.G. Annual Report, 1935, 1s. The whole subject could be read up from *Worship in Other Lands*; and followed up by the diagram-model and lessons issued by S.P.G. with title *In the Path of the Sun*, price 1s.]

3. FOLLOWING THE SHEPHERD

P. B. THORBURN

The sheep follow Him : for they know His voice.—St. John x. 4.

(1) THE ENGLISH SHEPHERD

HAVE you ever been to a sheep-dog trial? I have, and it is very interesting!

Each shepherd has a dog on a leash, and he stands at one end of a large field, whilst at the other end there is a flock of sheep about twelve or so in number. About the field there are hurdles, making lanes through which the sheep have to be driven, and at the end, where the shepherd and his dog are standing, there is a pen into which the sheep have to be guided.

At a given signal the shepherd lets his dog loose, and the dog races off to the end of the field where the sheep are, whilst the shepherd stays where he is, and is only able to tell his dog what to do by whistling and shouting. The shepherd is not allowed to follow his dog or the sheep, and to stop him from doing so he has a strap fastened to his wrist and tied to a stake which is driven into the ground. Away goes the dog to the end of the field where the sheep are huddled together. The sheep are frightened, and do not know which way to go. The dog barks and runs round them. Soon the frightened sheep begin to run away up the field towards the shepherd. But they must go through the lanes made by the hurdles; and so the dog has to work very hard running round and round them and barking. Sometimes all the sheep but one will go through the lane,

and then the dog has to race away after the sheep that has strayed and fetch it back.

Sometimes they will all go through the wrong lane of hurdles, and then the dog has to drive them back again and begin again! The dogs are very clever, and know what their masters mean by their whistles and calls, and soon they have the sheep all facing the pen into which they have to be gathered. Now the dog must not be in a hurry, or startle the sheep. He has to coax them into the pen. He often lies down on the grass and creeps forward little by little, nearer and nearer to the sheep, making them move together into the enclosure which is their fold.

There is only a certain time for each dog, and so it is very exciting at the end, for all the people looking on wonder if the dog is going to get all the sheep in in time! All the sheep must go in, and if only one breaks away and runs down the field, the dog has lost! At last every sheep is in, and the dog lies panting and wagging his tail at the opening of the pen, and the shepherd throws off the strap from his wrist and goes and pats the dog and takes him away. The dog that gets the sheep in the pen quicker than the others wins the trial!

(2) THE EASTERN SHEPHERD

Now do you notice one thing about that account of a sheep-dog trial? It is very different from the picture which Jesus gives us of the Eastern shepherd. Jesus said, "The sheep follow him: for they know his voice." Jesus told us that the sheep in the Holy Land knew the shepherd so well that when they heard his call they would follow him, and the shepherd would go in front and find the best grass for them to eat, and pure water for them to drink, and lead them at last into the shelter of the fold; and then he would lie down across the opening and be their door, and so keep them safe from wild animals and robbers.

That is the picture that the Twenty-third Psalm gives us also; the psalm that we know so well and sing so often:—"The Lord is my Shepherd; he shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort."

A traveller in the Holy Land was making his way home in the evening when he came to a valley in the hills where there was a pool of water. All round the pool there were sheep, some drinking at the edge, some lying down in the shade of the hills, and others cropping the short grass. There were several flocks of sheep together, and the shepherds were lying down on the hillside talking. It made a very beautiful picture—the purple shadow of the hills reflected in the quiet pool, the sheep like a fringe at the edge of the water, and the bright striped cloaks and head-dresses of the shepherds like a flower-garden on the green grass! The traveller had a friend with him, and he said, "How will those shepherds get their own sheep when they want to go home?" His friend said, "Let us wait here and see."

So they sat down on the hill-top and waited. Presently the shepherds got up, raised their right hand to each other to say "Good-bye," and began to make their way up the hillside in different directions. When they got a little way up, they turned, and putting their hands to their mouth to form a sort of trumpet, each uttered in turn a low musical call. As the sound was repeated, there was a movement at the water's edge, and then a large curly-horned ram was seen shouldering his way through the flock, and making his way up the hillside towards the shepherd whose voice he knew. Then another ram pushed his way out; and then another, and another. Soon there were several lines of sheep behind the leaders. The shepherds were now going on in front and climbing the hill with their own flock following behind. "The sheep follow him: for they know his voice."

(3) "ALL WE LIKE SHEEP"

Now, we are all like sheep. We are like sheep because we flock (or live) together; because we follow one another in what we do, or copy one another's example; because we are apt to stray from the right path; because we are rather helpless against attack; and because we need a Shepherd and a Fold.

But we are like the Eastern sheep, who are free to follow; we are not like the English sheep, who are driven by dogs! God has given us free-will. He will not compel us to follow Him, because if He did there would be nothing good or praiseworthy in our doing so. He wants us to follow Him because we know Him and love Him. There are many dangers if we don't follow. We shall certainly lose our way sooner or later. We shall find our happiness and peace of mind destroyed by bad habits, and by sin, just as the lost sheep might be destroyed by wild animals. We shall never find the Fold, which is Heaven, unless we follow the Good Shepherd.

Now, all boys and girls like their own way! But just think where "your own way" will lead you. It is right for boys and girls to have dreams of what they would like to do and what they would like to become; but you must have a guide through life. There are many voices calling you.

There is the voice of self-will. This voice says, "Why shouldn't you do as you like? You are only young once. When you are old you won't be able to enjoy yourself in the same way. Have a good time now!" And, when Mother or Father tells you you mustn't stay out late or go to the place you wanted to go to, this voice of self-will calls to you to please yourself. If you listen to it you won't be really pleasing yourself. You will be pleasing the Evil One, who calls to you through your self, and who makes you deaf

to the voice of the Shepherd, Who calls you along the right path.

Then there is the voice of pleasure, which often leads us astray. There are many things which are not wrong in themselves, but which lead us far from the sound of the Shepherd's voice, because the Shepherd calls us along the path of duty. Dancing is not wrong in itself, but the girl who goes to dances night after night when she ought to be doing home-work or helping Mother in the house, is listening to the voice of the world, and not to the voice of the Shepherd. So is the boy who goes too often to the pictures, or football matches, when he ought to be doing some useful work. The voice of pleasure won't lead you to a position in life in which you can be of service to others; but if you follow the Shepherd, you will find that you will be helping others all the way along the path of life.

Then there is the voice of sin. This voice calls everybody—young and old. It is a false voice. It pretends that the path of sin will lead you to a place of delight, and of comfort and of ease: somewhere where you won't have to work so hard, somewhere where you will be of great importance, or be very rich, if only you will tell a few lies, or be a bit dishonest, and perhaps a bit cruel. If you follow that voice, you will go over the precipice; and you won't be able to get back until the Shepherd finds you and carries you back to the fold. And, in that fall on the path of sin, you may get very badly hurt in your life and never be quite the same again.

(4) "THEY KNOW HIS VOICE"

How will you know which voice to follow? How will you be sure that it is the voice of the Good Shepherd?

The first thing is to keep within sound of His voice. The sheep that has wandered away cannot hear the voice of the shepherd because it is too far off. The voice of

the Good Shepherd sounds to us in our Christian homes; it sounds to us especially in our Church and Sunday School. We must keep within sound of it, or of course we shan't hear it! We must be regular at our church and regular at our Sunday School. We have got to listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd so that we may know it amongst all the other voices that are calling us in our life. We have got to train our inward ear so that we may pick out the voice from the others. The sheep, gathered round the pool, heard the voices of many shepherds; but they had learnt to know the voice of their own shepherd, who could lead them to the safety of their own fold. It is sometimes very difficult to know which voice to follow in life, but if we listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd, as we say our prayers, as we obey our parents, as we come to church Sunday by Sunday, we shall know His voice amongst all others, and be able to follow Him.

The very best way of learning to know His voice is by instantly obeying it when we do hear it. This sometimes means the difference between life and death. A party of school-boys were climbing crags in the English Lake District. They had come to a very difficult crossing of a gully between two crags. The master in charge was waiting on the other side of the gully, as each boy crossed. As the last boy was crossing, a rock on which he stood gave way and went hurtling down to the valley below, leaving the boy clinging with one hand to a rock above, and with one foot only on a narrow shelf of rock which remained firm. The boy's face was turned to the rock, and he could not move for fear of falling. The master's voice came to him clearly and firmly:

"Lean towards me as far as you can, and then let go."

"I can't see you, sir!" said the boy.

"I know," said the master; "but I can see you. Lean

towards my voice and then let go. I will catch you. Now!"

The boy, with his face pressed against the rock, leant over the gully in the direction of the master's voice and, as he felt himself slipping, let go, and the next moment the master's arm was round him, and he was drawn to safety on the other side. If he had not obeyed at once, he would have slipped. If he had not trusted the voice he knew, he would have been dashed to death. Instant obedience saved him; and obedience to the voice we know will teach us to trust the voice of the shepherd. We cannot see our Good Shepherd, but we may hear His voice and obey and learn to know it better. "To-day, if ye will hear His voice"!

(5) "THEY FOLLOW HIM"

Where did the sheep go when they followed the voice of the shepherd they knew? Over the hills, day by day to new pastures; through the valleys of Palestine, beside still waters; through rocky places, where wild beasts might be lurking. The sheep did not know where the shepherd would lead them; but they knew his voice and followed him. And every night the shepherd led them to the safety of the fold.

We do not know what lies before us on the path of life. There are new experiences for us every day as we grow older, new adventures and new dangers; but, if we follow the Good Shepherd, whose voice we know, He will lead us at last to the safety of the fold.

A missionary was once riding over the prairies of Canada, when he came upon a lad tending a flock of sheep. The missionary stopped and asked his way, and then asking questions he found that the lad knew hardly anything of God, or of Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd. Having very little time to stay, he taught the lad a text, "The Lord is

my Shepherd," and made him say it, counting each word upon his fingers. "Now," said the missionary, "turn down the fourth finger of your hand as you say '*my*' Shepherd." Some years after, the missionary was near the place again, and thought he would ask at the prairie farmhouse about the lad. A sad-faced woman answered his knock, and to his questions answered that the boy was dead. Then, looking at him intently, she said, "Are you the gentleman who taught him that text?"

"Yes," replied the missionary.

"Well," said the woman, "he was always saying that text; and he thought he was like the Good Shepherd because he looked after the sheep. And he did look after them. He was caught in a blizzard, trying to bring a lamb in to safety; and, when we found him, he had the finger of his hand turned down like you showed him"—"The Lord is *my* Shepherd."

"Shepherd most careful, warn us when straying,
Guide us in paths where thine own feet have trod;
Led by Thy call, Thy dear voice obeying,
Bring us in peace to the fold of God."

After this life there is heaven, our eternal home. If we try to listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd and follow Him, He will guide us safely, and bring us at last to the heavenly fold.

4. "TUESDAY'S CHILD"

THE EDITOR

(1) INTRODUCTION

I WONDER if you remember which day of the week you were born on? I expect you do. I say that because I am going to ask you another question. I wonder how many of you were born on a Tuesday?

"What a funny question to start with!" Yes, but there's a reason, and I'll tell you what it is. When I was a boy—not a very big boy—we used to say a rhyme, which I can still remember. That was ever so long ago, of course. It was in what my own little girl at home calls "the olden days." But we were looking in one of her nursery-books the other night, and there was the very same rhyme, printed in her book. This is how it begins.

*"Monday's child is fair of face;
Tuesday's child is full of grace."*

The rhyme goes on about all the days of the week, doesn't it? But I'm not going beyond "Tuesday's child" this afternoon, because it is "Tuesday's child" that I want you specially to think about.

I say "think," because "Tuesday's child" used to puzzle me a lot. I knew what the rhyme meant about the other children. Some were "fair of face." That was easy. It just meant being rather nice-looking. And some were "full of woe." And, of course, that was easy to understand. But what did it mean about "Tuesday's child"? What does it mean to be "full of grace"? I couldn't under-

stand it a bit at first. It was that word "grace" that puzzled me. Isn't it so with you? It is a puzzling word, to begin with.

So, let's see if we can find out about that word together this afternoon.

(2) GRACE IN THE BIBLE

We are going to look into three books to see more about this word, and, first of all, we will see what the Bible tells us, because it is always the best book, when we want to find out something about our Christian Faith.

Here, then, is our first passage. It was when the angel Gabriel came to the Mother of our Lord, to tell her that God had chosen her to be the Mother of Jesus. You have often seen pictures of the scene, haven't you? The angel, with joyful face, speaking to her, and the Mother of our Lord humbly receiving her great news? Now notice what Gabriel says. "Hail, thou that art endued with grace."* There is our word "grace," you see. What do *you* think the angel meant, when he said that St. Mary was "endued with grace"? Don't you think he meant that what made her so beautiful and good, and worthy to be the Mother of Jesus, was because God had given her this "grace," which made her what she was? Just let us think, for a minute, of that picture of St. Mary, and it will help us to see that "grace" fills people with goodness and joy.

But, as we all know, thinking about the Mother always makes us think about her Son, and I expect you are wondering if the Bible tells us anything about grace and Jesus, our Lord.

It certainly does. It is St. Luke who has written down for us nearly all that we know about our Lord when He was small, and there is a passage, in his second chapter, which describes the Baby, Jesus, being taken to the Temple for

* (R.V. Margin.)

His Presentation. After that St. Mary and St. Joseph went home, and the Boy grew up with them. St. Luke tells us about this. He says (St. Luke ii. 40): "And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom." That part is easy to understand, isn't it? Then he adds something that will help us with what we are trying to find out. He uses this word "grace," for he writes: "And the grace of God was upon Him."

Soon afterwards he goes on to describe our Lord's visit to the Temple, when He was twelve years old, and how much He cared about the things of God in His Father's house, and how the learned teachers were amazed at His understanding and His answers. Doesn't this help us to understand what grace means? We think of those pictures, which we have often seen, of the Boy Jesus, growing up so perfectly good and willing to do His Father's work. What made Him like that? Surely it was this "grace" which God gave to Him, so that he might be filled with all that is true and good and holy. Let us remember those words: "And the grace of God was upon Him."

We have seen, in these two pictures, something about the grace which God gave to two people—our Lord and His Mother—to make them what they were. But we must not think that it was given only to special people like that.

In the Acts of the Apostles there are some very interesting chapters, at the beginning of the book, which tell us about the first Christians, who worshipped together after the day of Pentecost, and how their goodness and bravery made other people want to become Christians too. St. Luke sums it up for us in one sentence, when he says: "And great grace was upon them all" (Acts iv. 33). And so we see that just as God had given His grace to our Lord and St. Mary, to make them so good and such an example to us, so also he gave His grace to those first Christians, so that they could be what Christians ought to be.

Just one more look at the Bible, and then we must turn to something else.

You may be thinking: "Of course God gave that grace to wonderful people like our Lord and St. Mary, and those early Christians. But what about people like me? Does He give it to everybody who wants it, or is it only for special people?"

That is a good question to ask, and the Bible gives us a very good answer, so that we can know for certain. St. Paul once taught some of his people about this very thing. He said that God treats us all alike. There is only one body and one Spirit; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. And God doesn't keep His good gifts just for the few. "Unto each one of us was the grace given" (Ephesians iv. 7). "Each one of us." That means you and me, doesn't it. This wonderful gift of grace that fills us with goodness, is something that God is ready to bestow upon every one of his children.

(3) GRACE IN THE CATECHISM

Now, let us open our Prayer-Books, and find the Catechism. Who can find the first place where "grace" is mentioned?

"I pray unto God to give me His grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life's end." I think that helps us a lot, if you notice what has gone before. The Catechism has been reminding us of what our god-parents promised that we should do, and it has made us wonder whether we can ever hope to live up to their promises, and then comes this sentence to show us that it will be all right. Grace is something that God gives us, so that we can go on serving Him faithfully.

Look, next, at that short piece after your duty to your neighbour. There is the same word again. "His special

grace." And the Catechism tells us, in the same place, how we may obtain it. We must call for it by diligent prayer. And, a little further on, you see it again, don't you? "I desire my Lord God our heavenly Father . . . to send His grace unto me, and to all people; that we may worship Him, serve Him, and obey Him, as we ought to do."

So the Catechism has taught us something further about grace. If we want it, we must pray for it and desire it.

And there is one thing more that it has to teach us, if you will look at the last portion about the Sacraments. In the two great Sacraments of the Gospel, Holy Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, God gives us, through the outward and visible signs of water, bread and wine, His inward grace, and so we are made, in the beautiful words which you can find for yourselves in this part of the Catechism, "the children of grace."

Now let us put together what the Bible and Catechism have shown us about this word "grace." (1) It was grace that made our Lord perfect and His Mother chief among women; and it was grace that made those early Christians such wonderful people; (2) this grace isn't just for special people: it is for all God's children; (3) in Holy Baptism He makes us "children of grace," and teaches us to pray for His grace continually; (4) in the Holy Communion we receive the Body and Blood of Christ, so that His grace may strengthen and refresh our souls.

(4) THE FIRE THAT WON'T GO OUT

I said that we would look into three books. But you haven't got our last book here in church, so I will tell you the story.

In the *Pilgrim's Progress*, when its hero, Christian, was on his way to the Heavenly City, there was a wonderful house, where Christian learned many things that he needed to know, and this was one of them.

In a room he saw a fire burning against a wall, and by it was a man standing, who kept throwing water upon it. You would have thought that the fire would soon go out, wouldn't you? But it only burned higher and hotter. Of course Christian couldn't understand how this happened, until he was taken into the next room, where he saw a man standing with a vessel of oil. And this man kept pouring oil into the back of the fire, so that, no matter how much water the other man poured on in front, the fire kept burning bigger and brighter.

What John Bunyan meant us to learn is this. Our souls are like the fire, which God lit at our Baptism. All the bad things in the world, and inside ourselves, try to put the fire out. But Christ stands by us, with the oil of His grace, always ready to hear our prayers, and to bless us at our Communions, when we get older, and to keep the fire burning in our hearts.

And so we can be sure that this wonderful grace that God has given us need never be lost, if only we will let Christ help us.

(5) CONCLUSION

We started by thinking about "Tuesday's child," didn't we? He is "full of grace," as the rhyme says. And now we know what that means.

He is a gracious person. He is loving, unselfish, brave, gentle, pure and really good. Why? Well, we know that, too. He is like that because of the "grace" that is in him. But the rhyme only says this about the children born on Tuesday, and so I think the rhyme must be wrong, just there, don't you?

For the Bible and the Catechism teach us that we can all be "Tuesday's child," and all be "full of grace," if we will ask for it in prayer and desire it with all our hearts.

5. GOD LETS US CHOOSE

L. M. NAYLOR

Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.—Joshua xxiv. 15.

ALL of you have at some time enjoyed playing at the game of "oranges and lemons." It is such fun when the time comes for us to choose whether we like oranges or lemons best, for we have no idea on which side our choice will land us. We may have to join forces with a very small company, or we may have chosen the stronger-looking side, which may still be the losing side. In a game of that kind our choice is a risk. Play or work is more exciting when we are free to choose the side for which we shall play, or the kind of work we may do. Most people are able to choose their work in life nowadays.

(1) CHOOSING OUR LIFE'S WORK

As we grow older we are asked sometimes what we should like to be when we are grown up, and, in imagination, we see ourselves working on board ship or in a large hospital, doing something we have longed to do, and we begin to feel quite excited about it. The kind of work we do in school is arranged so that it will help us to be a nurse, or an engineer, or whatever we have chosen. Many a boy or girl has worked through years of study looking forward with joy to the day when they will actually be able to do the work they have chosen and dreamed about.

People have not always had such help.

Charles Dickens as a young man had to work hard in a lawyer's office. That was not the work of his choice. If

anyone had said, "Charles, what would you like to be?" he would probably have said, "A writer, or an actor." But he had no choice. As time went on, and he learned how to write in shorthand, he began to write for a newspaper, and soon became famous through writing books, some of which you may have read. But years of hard work passed before he did the work that he wanted to do. And so with David Livingstone. If we had lived in a little town called Blantyre, in Scotland, just over a hundred years ago, we should have seen a boy turn out at six o'clock, in the cold greyness of a Scottish morning, and go to work. He was only ten years old when he left day school and began work in a mill, but already he had a *dream in his heart* of the kind of work that was his real choice.

All day long he stood at his post, and worked diligently and skilfully amid the "click-clack" of the looms, but when evening came he was able to do the kind of work that would help him to become what he really wanted to be—a missionary doctor. Perhaps you know the name of the boy I am talking about? David Livingstone. Each evening he got out his books, which he had bought out of his own earnings, and went to a night school. There he worked hard from eight to ten o'clock studying Latin, in preparation for that happy day when he should be free to go and be trained as a missionary. Sometimes he sat up till midnight studying the Latin dictionary—then his mother would come and take the book out of his hands and pack him off to bed. He must have felt sleepy often enough, at six o'clock in the morning, when he had to start work again in the factory.

Years afterwards, when he came home from Africa for a holiday, in talking about the hard work of a missionary out there he said, "If it had been possible to choose my training all over again, I should choose to pass through the same hardy training." It was hard work for Livingstone, but all the time he had the joy of looking forward to doing

the work of a missionary doctor—and the work of his choice led him to Africa.

(2) ISRAELITES WHO HAD NO CHOICE

Between three and four thousand years before Livingstone landed in Africa, the hot eastern sunshine beat down on the sands of Egypt, where crowds of swarthy slaves were compelled to work hard for an Emperor whether they wanted to do so or not.

One ambition of the Emperor's life was to leave great buildings behind him when he died: cities which people would look at in years to come, and say, "Pharaoh Rameses built those walls." So he ordered that the Israelite slaves should not only build cities, with strong forts and huge granaries, but that they should also make the bricks with which they were to build, from the black Nile mud, and drag them across the burning sands to the spot that he had chosen for his city. It was quite interesting work, but how they hated it! There were men amongst those slaves who had desires of their own about their life's work, who longed to settle down on some green hillside and just follow their own choice. One may have wanted to be a shepherd, and perhaps another would have liked to be a worker in brass, as many of the Egyptians were; but they were not allowed to choose. No wonder that they grumbled! You wouldn't like it if your father said, "Jack, you've *got* to be an engineer," or, "Joan, you *must* be a nurse."

(3) ISRAELITES WHO WERE ALLOWED TO CHOOSE

Years afterwards, when Moses had led his people away from slavery, and they were back in the green country of Canaan, a great leader named Joshua gave them a message:

from God. Joshua knew that God wanted their service, but that they would be tempted to worship and serve the gods of the people of Canaan; but Joshua also knew that God would not compel them to serve Him. He was no slave-master like the slave-masters of Egypt. God always offers free choice. "His service is perfect freedom." So one day Joshua gathered the people round him and gave them a message from God; it was this: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." And they went bravely and well through all kinds of hardship in conquering Canaan, because they were free people with free choice.

(4) THE LORD JESUS CHOOSES HIS FRIENDS

Because that message that Joshua gave came from God it is a true message now, as it was then, and is true for all time. Every day we can choose whether we will serve Him or not.

He has chosen us. The Lord Jesus, who is God, and who came to show us what God is like, chose friends for Himself, and left them free to choose Him or not. Peter, and James, and John and the others heard Him say, in that last lovely talk He had with them on Maundy Thursday night: "Ye are My friends—ye did not choose Me, but I chose you." We don't know what they replied. Perhaps they felt that it was so wonderful, that they couldn't say anything in words. When we were too young to say anything, the Lord Jesus chose us for His service. Our parents and god-parents brought us to the font, and the mark of His great Friendship for us was put on us. That mark is the Cross; it marks each one of us as the child of God, not the slave of God—belonging to Him because He chose us, but quite free to choose to serve Him or not.

Our wise parents and god-parents promised for us that we should serve him, just because we were not old enough

to make the promise ourselves. A great deal more happened to us in our Baptism than that, of which you have heard, or will hear another day. When we are ready and old enough to renew that big promise of service which was made for us, we are confirmed. We have a long time of preparation beforehand, when we learn what it means. Even then we are quite free: no one forces us to do it. The Bishop actually asks us if we *do* make again that promise of service which was made for us at the font.

(5) WHEN WE HAVE TO CHOOSE

Hard things often happen, and big decisions have to be made by those who want to serve God. They did to our Lord's first friends, and they do still. Sometimes the decision has to be made quite suddenly.

Zacchæus was a rich tax-collector, who lived in Jericho. He had all kinds of possessions that might have helped to make him happy—a fine house, rich clothes, and plenty of money. But they had been gained by dishonesty, and he had an uneasy conscience. It was the kind of life he had chosen, but it was a wrong choice. Then the Lord Jesus came to Jericho, actually to the house of Zacchæus; and Zacchæus wanted to make a different choice—he wanted to serve Jesus. But he couldn't: there was a great barrier in the way. He couldn't choose to serve Jesus and at the same time go on taking what was not his own; neither could he choose to keep stolen money. So he made a big decision. Wrong-doing had to be given up.

"Lord," he said, "the half of my goods I'll give to the poor, and if I owe any man anything, I will restore it to him four-fold." And the Lord Jesus said, "This day is salvation come to this house."

Zacchæus chose to serve Jesus and be poor. But he was really richer than he had ever been.

St. Peter, too, had a great choice offered to him, after the Lord Jesus had gone back to His Father in Heaven. He had been imprisoned in Jerusalem for teaching and baptizing people, and he boldly told his judges that when he was released he should choose to go on serving God by teaching people of the Lord Jesus just the same.

Our great choice for Jesus has been made. We shall not be put in prison for serving God, but many a time a day we, like St. Peter, have to renew our choice. It may be in all sorts of ordinary things.

Shall I play fair or not? Shall I be unselfish or selfish at home? Shall I give way to temptation just this once, and do what no friend of the Lord Jesus should do? Shall I speak the truth this time when it is so hard? Shall I go on trying when I'm so tired of trying? Shall I get up and go to the Holy Communion this morning, or shall I go to sleep again?

How thankful we can be, whenever the choice has to be made, that the Lord Jesus said "I have chosen you," (and He is always near and ready to help us to make the right choice); that we are marked with His Cross, and that we have promised to serve Him. Because He has chosen us we know that He has left us free to choose, and that He will help us to choose bravely.

6. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO BE?

A. H. CANDLER

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.—
Romans viii. 14.

(1) INTRODUCTION

HAVE you made up your mind what you are going to be or to do when you have grown up?

Perhaps, like most children, you have already made up your mind many times, and it will not stay made up! You grow out of your wishes, as you grow out of your clothes. Last week you wanted to be a fireman; this week you want to be a doctor; but you may want to be a ship's captain next week, and perhaps a steeplejack the week after that. What you are going to be is always thrilling, and sometimes noble; and from all the quite natural changes of mind there may remain something of real value in *you*. The zest, eagerness, imagination and longing with which you want to be nurse or farmer, airwoman or 'bus-conductor are part of you, though your desires change. You are none the worse, and maybe much better, for having wanted to follow all sorts of callings and do all sorts of things.

But some children when quite young have made up their minds, definitely, as to what they wanted to be. In some children a special gift has shown itself quite early. One famous artist, for instance, was found as a boy drawing on rocks and barn-doors, which is not the same thing as scribbling on walls, which is a nasty habit. Genius, like truth—and measles—will out. But we are not thinking of

genius in art, or music, or chemistry, or invention. And some children, like Samuel and John the Baptist, have followed the line their parents set for them: neither are we thinking of them. We are thinking of ordinary people who, as children, perhaps indeed because of home influences, decided for themselves once for all what they were going to be. Dr. Robert Laws, a great missionary doctor who worked in Livingstonia (and died recently), was one of these. From humble beginnings he became famous because all his life, with what is called single-heartedness, he followed the line he chose as a boy. None of you is too young to think seriously about what you are to be and what you are to do; and some of you are old enough to make up your minds quite definitely about it.

(2) OUR CHILDHOOD'S PATTERN

We are not told very much about our Lord's boyhood. We know that He went to Nazareth with St. Joseph and His holy Mother; and that in their simple home He "was subject unto them." We can guess some things about His early life. It is certain that He would be taken to the synagogue and helped to form a life-habit of worship. In the workshop, the village houses and streets, the market-place, the high-road, He would notice many things afterwards used in His teaching and parables.

Possibly His Mother taught Him to say, every night when He was going to sleep, the words He used with fuller meaning on the cross: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Possibly also, when His childhood's innocence was puzzled and hurt by sin in others, His Mother taught Him to pray the prayer He said over and over on the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." We can think such thoughts with profit to our souls, though they are only guesses.

But we know that at about twelve years of age He was taken up to Jerusalem to the Feast. We can tell from that story that already He was eager to learn and had a basis of learning. We can also tell that already He felt God's will for Him, and took it for granted that His Mother knew this. "Didn't you know," He said to her, "that I must be . . . in My Father's house," or "about My Father's business," whatever those words actually were. Later on our Lord showed, several times, that He felt Himself bound by the will of God—"I must work the works of Him that sent Me;" "How am I straitened till it be accomplished." Before He was twelve years old He felt like that, and knew something of what He must do. So we shall be following Jesus, "our childhood's pattern," if we try, while we are still young, to make up our minds what we are to do and what we are to be. His work in the world, as Son of God made man, was to do the will of God. Whatever we are when we grow up, we, as children of God, should make up our minds *now* to follow the will of God. That is the first point:

You are not too young to think what God wants you to be and what God wants you to do.

Perhaps you already know the collect in which we pray that we may "perceive and know what things" we "ought to do." If not, you can learn it (First Sunday after Epiphany), and use it.

(3) THE STORY OF LATOUR D'Auvergne

Many people know quite well that such and such things ought to be done. They say, "Someone ought to do this," or "Somebody should see to that"; but it does not enter their minds that they themselves might try to do whatever should be done.

You all know the story of the Dutch boy who plugged the hole in the dyke with his own arm. There was no other way, and nobody else was there to do anything; and he was sensible and brave enough to do, himself, what he knew should be done. But do you know the story of Latour d'Auvergne?

If ever you go to see the tomb of Napoleon in Paris, you will see there a few other honoured names. One is that of Latour d'Auvergne. This is his story. He was a grenadier in one of Napoleon's regiments, and he was entrusted with a message. To deliver the message he had to go by a certain pass; and he knew enough of the general's plans to know that the enemy should not be allowed through that pass until the next day. But when he came to the fort at the head of the pass he found that the garrison had deserted, leaving arms and ammunition. He knew that the fort and the pass must be kept against the enemy. There was only himself to keep it.

So he set to work to load all the muskets and put them at the various openings. Then he calmly waited until the enemy came. When the attacking army came into sight, he fired several of the muskets, rushing from one opening to another, and making the enemy think that there were many soldiers in the fort. When the enemy halted he quickly reloaded the muskets; and when they tried to put a big gun into position he fired again from various points in the fort and made them leave the gun. Whenever they tried to use the gun he fired off many muskets, reloading when he got the chance.

Finally some soldiers appeared with a flag of truce. So he showed himself to speak with them. When they demanded the surrender of the fort he went inside as if to tell the commander. When he showed himself again he said that the commander would surrender the fort the next morning (when the loss of it would not matter to Napoleon's

plans), on condition that the garrison should be allowed to pass out freely with its arms. The enemy colonel agreed; and Latour d'Auvergne settled himself for the night. In the morning the enemy soldiers lined up outside the fort to let the garrison pass out with the honours of war; but there came out only one grenadier staggering under a load of muskets!

"Where is the garrison?" demanded the colonel. "I am the garrison, Colonel," said Latour d'Auvergne. And when the colonel was convinced of the amazing truth he saluted Latour, and sent him under escort to Napoleon with a letter telling the whole story.

Napoleon sought to honour Latour by making him an officer, but he preferred to remain a grenadier. So Napoleon gave him a special title "The First Grenadier of France"; and that title he kept, although he was offered other promotions later in the wars. He was killed in battle; but his name was always called at the Roll-call of his regiment. When the name was called, a sergeant would step forward, salute, and say, "Dead on the field of fame." The name "Latour d'Auvergne" is honoured side by side with that of Napoleon himself; and this story may help you to stand alone for what you know is right.

Latour is a good example of a man who did not hesitate to try to do himself what he knew ought to be done. Somebody has said, "If you know a thing ought to be done, is not that a sign that God wants you to do it?"

So the second point is:

If you know a thing ought to be done, ask yourself whether you ought not to try to do it.

(4) IS IT TOO HARD?

And the story of Latour d'Auvergne should also teach us that we should not fail to try because the task seems too

hard for us. The Christian Gospel is the good news of new life from God, new power to live as the children of God. If something should be done, and we ought to do it, we shall find the power to do it, if we try.

Moses made all sorts of excuses to avoid doing what God wanted him to do; but his necessary helper, Aaron, was already waiting. The women going to our Lord's tomb on the first Easter morning (who already, before the Sabbath, had bought the spices and other things, and who got up early, doing *all that they could*) worried about the big stone, saying, "Who shall roll us away the stone?"—but the stone was already rolled away. David, feeling that he ought to tackle the Philistine giant who was frightening all the army of Israel, tried on Saul's armour and weapons; but realised that he could not go with those, and that what he had himself—the shepherd's sling and the skill to use it, a stout heart and the help of God—were sufficient. In that prayer, the collect for the first Sunday after Epiphany, we pray not only that we may perceive and know what things we ought to do, but also for "grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same."

So the third point is:

If we try to do whatever good we know ought to be done, God will help us to do it.

(5) CONCLUSION

Let us go over our three points:

1. Even when young I can think about what God wants me to be and to do.
2. If I know a thing ought to be done I should ask myself "Ought *I* to try to do it?"
3. No matter how hard it is, if it ought to be done and I ought to try to do it, God will help me if I try.

We can think of these points whenever we say the prayer of all the children of God :

“Hallowed be Thy Name ;
Thy kingdom come ;
Thy will be done ;
in earth as it is in Heaven.”

That will help us to live as the children of God.

And we can remember these points also as we end the prayer: “For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory.” That will keep us humble, knowing that God, our Father and King, has claims upon us, and that we have not done all His will, and that our power to do anything good comes from God, to Whom alone is the glory.

7. CHRIST'S SOLDIER AND SERVANT

N. W. GOODACRE

(1) THE POWER OF JESUS

I EXPECT most of you have played with a magnet, and picked up needles and pins and all kinds of bits of steel. You may have tried to see if a magnet has any effect on other materials like wood and stone, and found that it cannot move these substances at all. What is it that makes a magnet such a fascinating toy?

There is a hidden power in its shining steel horseshoe shape. Besides being able to draw to itself a piece of steel that is quite near, there is another wonderful property which a magnet possesses. It is able to attract a piece of steel from a distance, if it is powerful enough. If your mother lost one of her needles, and brought a big enough magnet into the middle of the room, that magnet would be strong enough to draw to itself the tiny needle that was lost.

I am sure that you have noticed that people also have this magnetic power. Some people attract us very much, and others seem rather dull. We love to listen to a preacher who can tell us a story in such a way that we are drawn to God by its compelling power. We like the teachers in school who are so clever that even a subject we dislike becomes attractive and interesting when they take the lesson. Even people we read about in books have an enormous attraction for us. We are thrilled by their adventures, and we long to do similar brave deeds ourselves. The Lord Jesus had just this magnetic attraction for the people whom He met. People were irresistibly drawn to Him by the com-

pulling love in His heart. The crowds used to follow Him, to watch His deeds and hear His teaching, and even the Pharisees, who didn't like Jesus, had to admit that all the world had gone after Him.

And, just as it is true that the only thing which a magnet can attract to itself is a piece of steel of similar substance, so it was with Jesus and His attractive power. He could only draw to Himself people who had the capacity to respond to His love. Their hearts needed to be ready to love and believe in Him, before He could heal them or teach them about God.

(2) A ROMAN CENTURION WHO LOVED THE JEWS

During part of His life as a Teacher, Jesus lived in the little fishing town of Capernaum, which was situated on the shore of the Lake of Galilee. It was a lively, busy town, and there were always little crowds of fishermen and peasants gathered on the quayside, where the boats were anchored and the nets hung out to dry. It was here and in the marketplace that all the business and all the talk of the town took place, and you could often meet your friends down by the lake-side. The children bathed, shouted and played their games down there. The small white houses, with their flat roofs and outside stone steps, clustered in groups round the quay, and the larger houses, with their shady trees and beautiful gardens, were stretched over the hillside above the town.

In one of these large houses there lived a Roman centurion who had command of the small military force in Galilee.

He was a fine-looking soldier in his shining armour, and his chief work consisted in keeping order among the various political parties, who were always quarrelling. I think you will remember that the Romans had conquered the Jews, and that there was always a small Roman army

stationed in the country to put down risings among the people. A Roman centurion had command of a hundred men, and, although very few of these Roman soldiers knew very much about the God of the Jews, most of them were faithful and brave men, willing to give their lives for their Empire.

This particular centurion was a very remarkable man. He was a religious man, and his heart was ready to believe in God. He was a man with a great possibility of faith. He had learned much about the Jewish belief in God from the Scribes and Chief Priests, with whom we think he was friendly, and was ready to learn more. He was the kind of man whom the Lord Jesus would be able to inspire and help.

This centurion was justifiably popular among the Jews in Capernaum, because he had done so many things to help the people. Although he was a Roman, he was open-minded and fair to the people of other countries. He had actually built a new synagogue for the town, and made it possible for the people to worship God in a beautiful building. It was quite natural that everyone should look up to him and admire him. We know, too, that he was good to his own servants, and loved all those who worked for him.

(3) THE CENTURION'S SERVANT FALLS ILL

One day this centurion's most faithful servant fell ill, and everyone knew about it in the town. They were very sorry for their soldier friend, because they knew how much he depended upon his favourite servant, and how faithful the servant had always been to his master. Everything was done for the sick man, and still he made no improvement. The doctors could not heal him, and the centurion was at his wits' end to think of a way of saving his life.

The centurion had heard much about Jesus of Nazareth,

though probably he had never met Him face to face. He had heard about His works of healing, and felt how good and wonderful He must be. We think that he must have felt that attractive magnetic power of Jesus: His power to love and understand all kinds of people in the world; His power to work miracles of healing even at a distance, by the power of His word only; and he felt himself drawn to Jesus in his anxiety. Gradually the servant grew worse, and the soldier was talking with his friends among the Jews about what could be done, when news came to the house that Jesus of Nazareth had returned to Capernaum, after many days of teaching and healing in the country districts of Galilee.

When the centurion heard this news, he thought to himself, "I believe that Jesus of Nazareth can heal my servant," and, turning to his friends, he said, "Will you go down to the quayside, where Jesus will probably be talking with the fishermen, and beg Him to come up and heal my servant? I do not feel worthy to go down and ask Him myself."

The great soldier's friends willingly consented to find Jesus, and make this request to Him. Hurrying down the hill to the lake-side, where the scene was alive with colour and sunshine, they found the Lord Jesus, surrounded by His friends, and began to explain to Him their message. They asked Him earnestly if He would come to the centurion's house. "He is worthy that you should do this for him," they said to Jesus. "He loves our nation, and he himself built us our new synagogue." Jesus saw their earnest faith, and at once agreed to come with them. Together the little band of people, followed in the distance by many others, moved up the narrow streets towards the shady cypress trees which marked the lane leading to the soldier's house.

(4) JESUS COMES TO THE CENTURION'S AID

They were not very far away from the house when the centurion himself, with some of his household, came out to

greet them. We may think that they would know at once which of the little group of people was Jesus. The centurion would see the beauty and love shining from His eyes, and he could feel that strange power, like the magnet's, drawing him.

He saw Jesus, and ran forward and fell at His feet, saying, "Lord, I am not worthy that you should come into my house." Then he said something which surprised even Jesus, for it showed how much the centurion understood His wonderful power over illness and trouble and death. He said, "I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me, and I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goeth, and to another, 'Come,' and he cometh, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he doeth it." And then he added, "I believe that you have only to say the word, and my servant shall be healed of his sickness." The Lord Jesus was filled with joy at the man's great faith, and, turning to the crowds who were following, He said, "Truly I tell you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Then turning to the soldier, Jesus said with deep feeling, "Go your way; as you have believed, so be it done to you."

The centurion returned with joy to his house to find it even as Jesus had said. His servant had been made better not many minutes before. He could hardly contain himself for the happiness that he felt, and he was very, very thankful that he had believed so firmly and utterly that the Lord Jesus Christ would be able to heal his beloved servant.

Perhaps years afterwards that splendid Roman centurion, whose great faith won the love and admiration of Jesus, would be one of those to become a member of His Church, and be a Christian. No doubt he would come to know the wonderful courage and love which Jesus showed upon the Cross, and would know of His glorious Resurrection from the dead. All this brave conclusion to the earthly life of the Lord Jesus would surely appeal to a faithful Roman soldier,

and make him want more than anything else in the world to call himself a Christian and a follower of Jesus Christ for the rest of his life.

Do you know some of the words which were said at your Baptism, when you were made members of Christ and of His Church? The words remind us of the faithful centurion. The priest signed each one of you with the sign of the Cross, and said that you should never be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and that you should fight manfully under His banner against all that is evil and wrong; and that you should continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto your life's end.

8. THE WAVES OF INFLUENCE

C. A. MARTIN

None of us liveth unto himself.—Romans xiv. 7.

ST. PAUL in writing to the Romans said, "None of us liveth unto himself." If we did it wouldn't matter nearly so much what kind of people we are. Actually everything we do, and many things we say, affect other people, and this influence, as we call it, goes out in ever-widening circles until it reaches all over the world.

You have often thrown a stone into a pond. It first makes a "plomp" as it goes into the water; then you can watch the circles or little waves starting from where the stone hit the water, and getting bigger and bigger until they reach the edge of the pond. Our influence is like that—just one action like the stone in the pond and then ever-widening circles or waves going out from it.

Most of you know the difference one member of a football or hockey team can make to all the rest. A good player, who remembers that he is part of a team, can have a wonderful influence, but a selfish player, who never passes, will create a wrong spirit all through and will very often spoil the chances that the side had of victory.

(I) THE WORLD AND THE TEAM SPIRIT

As a result of recent discoveries the peoples of the world have been drawn very much closer together, and in the big game of life the nations count very much one on another. We are, as it were, playing in a team, we are nearer to each

other, we can travel so quickly, and we can hear each other on the wireless.

In a new way St. Paul's words are true, "None of us liveth unto himself." Take but one example. Hundreds of the young people of Lancashire work in cotton mills. At the end of the week they get their wages, and then comes the exciting part of thinking out what to do with the money. All the week they have been helping to make dresses and shirts and handkerchiefs, and the cotton itself (what we call the raw material) has come from many parts of the world, but probably some came from Uganda in East Africa. There hundreds and thousands of African boys and girls have been working, picking and packing that same cotton in order to send it to their brothers and sisters in Lancashire. They also get paid for their work, and they too have the thrill of deciding what to do with the money.

It is only in recent years, through the work of the Missionary Societies, that the people of that part of the world have had any schools, and money in the hands of people who have not been to school and learned how to use it can be a very dangerous thing. It is just like many other useful things—a saw is very useful to a carpenter, but very dangerous if it gets into the hands of a small boy who hasn't learnt how to use it.

So Manchester influences Africa, and Africa influences Manchester.

(2) THE WAVES OF INFLUENCE

Actually the waves of influence at the present time are going out from those of us living in the west, and the people in the East are having their lives changed by the kind of influence which goes out. Well, what kind of influence shall it be?

There are some who see the chance of making bad money through the present state of affairs, and the influence they

send out is in terms of intoxicating drink, pistols and gunpowder; but there are heaps of other people who are trying to let our influence be all for the good. We are all in it.

How can you make your influence count for good?

What are you going to be when you leave school? That is one of the most interesting questions, because it opens the door to such marvellous flights of imagination. You can build castles in the air. One small boy who was asked the question replied quite seriously, "I'd like to be a Lord Mayor or a burglar."

There are so many possibilities, but for the boy or girl who is really trying to be the best, the most important question is, "What does God want me to be?" For only as we are in line with God's wishes can our influence be the best and the strongest for good.

He may call some to be missionaries—that is, to give your life to making known the way of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You might be a doctor or a nurse or a school-teacher or a clergyman, and in and through the means used you would be trying to win people for Jesus Christ.

If this is God's call to you, it is the most wonderful thing that can happen to you. Think of such people as Dr. Grenfell of Labrador, William Carey, the cobbler's boy, who went out to India, Bishop Patteson of the South Sea Islands, Mary Slessor, the wonderful woman who worked on the West Coast of Africa, and thousands of others whose names may not be so well known, but who have done heroic service.

To be a missionary is not necessarily to do some great task which makes you famous. More often it is a quiet, unnoticed service requiring grit and determination; but if it is service offered to God He accepts and uses it.

There are many ways in which God calls. He called Alexander Mackay, the young Scottish engineer, when he was reading a newspaper. He saw there the appeal of H. M. Stanley from Africa. Others feel that the love of God is

so great that they must do something to let others know, and the needs and opportunities overseas seem so big that this constitutes a call. If God wants you, He will tell you, if you ask Him to do so.

(3) MAKING A NEW WORLD

Apart altogether from being missionaries, I wonder where you will all be in twenty years' time? More than probable many of you will be living overseas.

You may be traders, or settlers, or Government officials, or in the Services, or married to a man whose business takes him overseas. In every case, as you go abroad, your influence will be as great as that of a missionary, and it will be for good or for evil, for *God* or against Him. Our own countrymen who live overseas are one of the greatest streams of influence we can send out.

Two Scotsmen, brothers who shared the name of Moir, went out to Africa some sixty years ago to set up a business. They had heard of the infamous trade in human beings as slaves, and decided that only as you gave the African another form of trade would the slave-trade be eventually wiped out. They set out, therefore, to found a company to trade in ivory from the tusks of the jungle elephants.

Quite soon after starting to work, John and Frederick Moir gathered round them a number of curious African followers.

One of the two brothers wore spectacles, and the bright Eastern sun was easily reflected by them. As the Africans saw the sparkle of the light from the spectacles they were immensely delighted and shouted "Mandala, Mandala," a word in their tongue which means "bright, twinkling." Later, the owner of the spectacles was known as Mandala, a friendly nickname, and later still, the company the brothers founded, The East Africa Lakes Trading Corporation, was

known to the Africans by the same title—"Mandala." Years passed, and the two brothers left their work to others who carried on in the same way, and they came home.

After an even longer lapse of time, one of the brothers went back to his old haunts in Africa, and there found that a new word had been coined in the language of the people. It was "Mandala," and now signified, in the African language, all that was above-board, straight and honest in dealing, as we should say, "Honour bright."*

The influence for good in those two men, not missionaries in the exclusive use of the term, had proved a power in that land. It would be fine if our nicknames—if we have them—could in time be the synonym of all that is good and noble and true.

(4) THOSE WHO STAY AT HOME

There are many who for one cause or another will never leave the old country. Can our influence tell for God and His cause? Surely it can.

The man who speaks in Broadcasting House may not move far out of London, but the effect of his words is felt all over the world. We never know when some quite simple act is going to be the means of bringing an influence to bear in a much wider circle than we could imagine.

There are people who have never been abroad, and yet who have been the means used by God to bring the call to others who have been greatly used in the mission-field. Here are three ways in which you can be an influence at home.

(a) Our prayers can be a great influence on *others*. There are many children who have been used through their prayers to win people for God. Missionaries who are doing

* See *Black Treasure*, by Basil Mathews, published by Edinburgh House Press.

the work in other lands depend on our prayers more than anything else.

(b) Our gifts help to influence people. A small boy was at a missionary meeting, and he heard there how the missionaries made use of pictures illustrating the Gospel story. With his own money he bought a picture—it cost only a penny, but it was his own penny—and then he sent it to the Missionary Society to send out to Africa. Many months afterwards the news came of several Africans being converted to God, and the missionary told of his adventures into their territory and the value of the little penny pictures which had aroused such interest.

(c) There are ever so many people here in England who are living without God in their lives. If some of them were won for Him they might be a tremendous force for the Kingdom of God. It may be that God wants some of the boys or girls at your school to be missionaries, and through you he wants them to hear the call.

(5) NONE OF US LIVETH UNTO HIMSELF

This very day we shall be sending out more waves of influence from the place where we live. The best way to make sure that they are waves of good will be to give ourselves to God and His service.

“Just as I am, young, strong and free,
To be the best that I can be,
For truth and righteousness, and Thee,
Lord of my life, I come.”

9. PRIESTS AND PASTORS

EMBERTIDE

THE EDITOR

(1) INTRODUCTION

WHEN you are in church, listening to a priest as he preaches, have you ever thought, "I wonder how a man becomes a priest? What he has to do? And what he must know?" I ask you that question because I can remember very well that I used to wonder about it, when I was your age. I should have liked to speak to a priest about it, and to have asked him all sorts of questions. But, of course, I was much too shy to do so.

This afternoon I am going to tell you something about it, because this week is Embertide. Next Wednesday, Friday and Saturday we are all asked to pray for the young men whom the Bishop will ordain on Sunday as deacon or priest. We must not think of them as being made deacons and priests just by the Bishop himself, as though he were all alone. Our prayers are meant to help; so that next Sunday, when the ordinations are going on, we can think about those young men, and feel that we are having some share in joining in the work of the Holy Spirit, who blesses them for their work.

(2) HOW THE CALL CAME

The boy I am going to tell you about was called John, and, when I was young, I knew him very well.

Ever since he was quite little, he had wanted to be a priest. Of course, at that age he didn't understand very much about it. He thought that being a priest meant putting on a surplice, and then going into a pulpit to preach, which wasn't quite right. But that was his idea, and he was never so happy as when he could play at "services." He would put on a white night-gown (because in those days children wore night-gowns more often than pyjamas) over his ordinary clothes, and get the nursery furniture all arranged like a church. Then he would ring a bell, and get his brother and sister to come and be the congregation, and they would have a service.

This went on until he was quite a big boy at school. There was a very good headmaster, and a chaplain who used to take the services. When John looked at them, and listened to what they had to say, he began to wonder whether he would ever be good enough to be ordained. And, soon afterwards, he was confirmed, and he began to wonder still more, because Confirmation made him see that there was such a lot he must learn to conquer before he could be a good Christian, let alone a good priest.

I think he would have given up the idea altogether. But one night, in the school chapel, at Sunday Evensong, a missionary from abroad preached the sermon, and told the boys how much God wants men to go and serve him, and John thought: "Well, if He wants men as much as that, perhaps He wants even boys like me." And after that he made up his mind that he would try to be a priest, if God would have him. And another friend of his, called Guy, made up his mind too, and told John about it.

What happened to those two boys is the first thing that must always happen to anyone who is to be ordained. They knew that God wanted them. To put it in Bible words (which I want you to remember), they were "called."

(3) THE TRAINING

Then they began to wonder what they would have to do, and they had a long talk with the school chaplain. He said they would have to work as hard as ever they could at school, and then go to a University, where they would become "learned" men, and after that they would go to a theological college, where they would learn the clergyman's work in helping God's people.

"It will cost rather a lot of money," said the chaplain, "because you won't be able to earn your living until you are twenty-three, and the University and the theological college will cost rather a lot." That didn't matter for John, because his father and mother had the money. But Guy's father and mother had not much money. When the chaplain heard about this, he said he would write to a place called the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield, where they helped boys who had not much money to become priests, and he did.

So John and Guy both went on in their different ways. John went to Cambridge and got his degree, and then to a college, at Ely, to be trained as a priest. Guy went to Mirfield and Leeds University, and they were ready on the same day to be ordained.

(4) THE DIACONATE

But you can't be ordained priest straight off. First, you must be ordained deacon, and serve for at least a year as a deacon, before the Bishop can ordain you to the priesthood.

When you are made a deacon you look just like a proper clergyman, because you wear the same sort of coat and collar as a priest. But, actually, there is a big difference. The Bishop, when he ordains you, only gives you power to do certain things. You may preach, you may help the priest

at Holy Communion, and you may baptize and take funerals, and visit people. But you can't do the big things, which are entrusted to a priest.

I expect you are wondering now, whilst I say this, how there came to be deacons in the Church. It all started with what we read about in Acts vi. when the Apostles had too much to do, and God appointed certain men called "deacons" to help them. The word "deacon" just means "helper." They are the "helpers" of the priests. They help in the pulpit, at the Holy Communion, and at the font, in Holy Baptism.

John and Guy both spent a year as deacons, and during this time they were learning what a priest's work is really like. At the end of the year they had to pass another examination, and go before their Bishop, so that he could make sure that they really understood what a priest's work is, and then they came to the great day of their life, when the Bishop laid his hands upon them, and gave them the sacred gift of priesthood.

(5) THE PRIESTHOOD

People think in such funny ways about the priesthood. Some people seem to think that a priest is only a kind of preacher, or someone to take the chair at things called committees. Will you find the service called "The Ordering of Priests" in your Prayer-Books?

Now let us look together at what really happens whenever two deacons, like John and Guy, are made priests.

You see that the Prayer-Book says that the "Receivers" are humbly kneeling upon their knees, and then the Bishop says to them the great words which give them power to do their work. He gives them "power" (or, as we should say, "authority"—which means the "right") to do certain great things. What is the first "right"? You can all see

it in your Prayer-Books. He gives them authority to forgive sins, just as our Lord gave that authority to His Apostles, nearly two thousand years ago. "Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven."

That is the first thing that we must always remember, when we think about our priests. They have been given authority to tell us that our sins are forgiven. In Morning and Evening Prayer we hear them say that God forgives us if we are really sorry, and in the Holy Communion they say that also. But there is something else that our Prayer-Book teaches us. If people are unhappy about their sins, and go to a priest to speak privately to him about their troubles, he has power from God to hear the confession and to give God's absolution. I want you to remember that. If you are ever fighting against a sin that keeps on getting the better of you, don't go on fighting alone. God has given his priest power to help you.

Then, if you will look at your Prayer-Book again, you will see that God gives His priests two other pieces of work to do. They are to be dispensers of the "Word," which means teaching people the truth about God and His Church from Holy Scripture. And they are to dispense the Sacraments. When a man is made a priest he is able to baptize the children, celebrate the Holy Communion, marry people, listen to their troubles, and minister to them when they are dying.

At first a priest is too young to have a parish of his own. He serves as a curate to an older man, and then, when he is ready to take charge of a parish, he is made a vicar. John and Guy are both vicars now. One is in a big town, and the other in the country. But they both have just the same work, for they are both trying to help people to fight against their sins, and to receive God's grace, and to understand God's truth.

(6) THE PASTOR

There is one other way of thinking about a priest, which is very important. Jesus said, "I am the Good Shepherd." You know those pictures, don't you, of the sheep that is being carried home by the Shepherd? Because the clergy try to copy our Lord in His love for His children, they try to be shepherds too, following the example of the Lord Jesus.

That is why they go to visit the sick, the poor, and the aged. And that is why every good priest is always fond of children, just as Jesus was. I want you to remember that your clergyman is a pastor, because it will help you to treat him in the right way.

Some grown-up people, and some children too, are so frightened of a clergyman, and they are shy and awkward with him, and make him feel shy and awkward too. That is because they think of him as someone "above" them.

You must never think of a priest like that. He isn't "above" any one. He wants to be the friend of all, rich and poor alike. Always think of your priest as you do about an uncle that you are really fond of, and can tell everything to. He is ever so fond of you, though grown-up people can't show that sort of thing much, and he wants you to be fond of him. He wants you to be fond of him, so that you will enjoy listening to the things that he has to teach to you in church and school, and, later on, at the Confirmation Classes; and so that you will do what he says, and be regular at your Communion and Sunday worship, and grow up to be a credit to your Church.

He often prays for you. Don't forget to pray for him, at least once a week, will you?

(7) CONCLUSION

I haven't been able to tell you anything like all the things that I wanted to about your clergy. But we have learned together this afternoon some things that we can put into our prayers.

On each of these Ember Days, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, this week, will you pray, first of all for your own clergy, and then for all the young men whom the Bishop will ordain next Sunday? Pray that they may become good priests and good shepherds, and that they may love their people, and that their people may love them in return.

10. THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

E. M. PEARSON

I am the light of the world.—St. John viii. 12.

(1) INTRODUCTION

WHEN Jesus Christ was here on earth, His favourite way of teaching people was by parables, or what we might call picture-stories, and people loved to listen to Him. In those days, boys and girls, and grown-ups too, liked pictures just as much as we do. They hadn't in those days many of the pictures such as we have hung on our walls or in books—pictures which we can look at with our eyes—and, of course, they hadn't any cinema pictures at all.

But that made them enjoy all the more the kind of pictures that can be made with words, and which we can see with the eyes of our mind; and the word-pictures which Jesus painted were very beautiful pictures indeed. And besides the picture-stories called parables, Jesus sometimes gave His disciples picture-thoughts which they had to think out for themselves—beginnings of pictures we might call them, which they had to finish for themselves.

I am going to give you one of these picture-thoughts to-day, and ask you to think out with me the rest of the picture.

(2) THE VALUE OF LIGHT

Here it is—Jesus said, “I am the Light of the World.”

Let's try to think what can have been in His mind. Shall we think a bit first about the actual light all round about us in the day-time?

Where does it come from? . . . Yes, of course, from the sun. And what difference does it make to us when the sun rises in the morning and the light comes? . . . Yes, we can see to go about and to work, or read, or play, or whatever we want to do, without difficulty or danger. In the dark we are uncertain and timid. Light enables us to have clear knowledge of things round us, and makes us unafraid. And there are other ways in which light is very useful too.

You all know what happens to plants, if they are left for long in the dark. They lose the green colour healthy plants should have, and become white and sickly-looking instead. They cannot be strong and healthy without light, and neither can animals, or boys and girls either. Children who do not have enough sunlight grow weak and ill; but they grow strong and well again when they are given plenty of fresh air and light.

So light brings *health* and *strength*, as well as courage and power to see clearly. And one thing more. Does it make any difference to our spirits whether a day is clear and sunny or dull and foggy? Of course it does? Sunshine puts us in good spirits, and helps us to feel cheerful and gay.

So light brings us many blessings. This afternoon I want you to think especially of just one, the first one we thought of—the blessing of being able to see.

Sometimes we use that word “see” in rather a different way. For instance, in school sometimes, perhaps in arithmetic-time, you have said, “I’m in a muddle: I can’t see how to do this.” And then your teacher has come and explained a bit, and presently you have said, “Yes, thank you, I can see now how to do it.” Could you put it in another way, I wonder, what it was you meant by seeing in this case? Yes, of course, you meant understanding: at first you couldn’t understand, and after a little explanation you did understand. You were using the word “see” as a kind of picture-word for understand, weren’t you?

And you could carry on the picture by saying that your teacher threw light on the subject for you.

(3) THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Now, then, shall we try to fill in that picture which Jesus began when He said, "I am the Light of the World"?

There are two stories, quite close together in St. Luke's Gospel, which I am going to ask two of you to read aloud presently, while the rest listen. These two stories tell of Jesus helping two different people to see, in the two different ways we have been thinking about.

Both these people lived in the city of Jericho, at the foot of the long, steep hill which led up to Jerusalem. And the time that Jesus helped them was when He was passing through Jericho, on His way up to Jerusalem for the last time. Many of His disciples were with Him, and a crowd of other people as well, because the great feast of the Passover was shortly to take place, and crowds of people always went up, you remember, to Jerusalem at that time.

Now, Jesus had very important matters in mind, because He meant to offer Himself to the people in Jerusalem as the Prince of Peace. He felt certain they would refuse to accept Him and would treat Him cruelly. But, all the same, He meant to do this, because He was sure it was God's will that He should. And the disciples' minds were very full too; but the idea in their minds was that something very glorious was about to happen, and that they were going to have a share in this. And so it wasn't perhaps, as we sometimes say, a very good time for two men, who wanted to get close to Jesus, to try to do so; but you will hear how they managed to get close to Him all the same, and what happened when they had succeeded in coming face to face with Him. The name of the first man is not given by St. Luke, but some of you may know what it was from another version of the story.

[A boy or girl previously selected and prepared should here come to the front and read St. Luke xviii. 35-43.]

Does any one know the name of this man? Yes: Bartimæus. Bartimæus was blind, and Jesus gave him power to see everything round him. And what use did he straight-way make of his sight? He followed Jesus in the way up to Jerusalem.

Now for the second story. The name of the man in this story is given by St. Luke. He wasn't blind, like Bartimæus, and he wasn't a beggar. He was a very rich man, but a man who was thoroughly disliked by everyone. One reason for this was that he was dishonest and grasping. His work was that of a publican, or tax-gatherer, for the Roman Government. Most of you know that the Roman Government had what seems to us a very strange way of collecting taxes. It didn't decide just what each person ought to be asked to pay, and then pay someone a salary for collecting the proper amounts, as our English Government does. Instead it gave the publicans authority to get as much as they could from the people, and then to keep a good deal for themselves. So the publicans were tempted to be greedy and dishonest, and most of them fell into the temptation. That was one reason why they were disliked, but there was another reason, too, why the Jewish people not only disliked, but despised, some of them, and that was that they thought it unpatriotic for a Jew ever to help in collecting taxes for the Romans.

Now, the man in the story you are going to hear was "a son of Abraham," that is to say a Jew, and so he was not only disliked, but despised by all those who were with Jesus on His way through Jericho. This made great difficulties in the way of the man carrying out his desire of getting near to Jesus, but you will hear how he overcame all difficulties. We are not told why he wanted to see Jesus, or that he asked for anything when he did get near; but you will hear of the

blessing—of two blessings—that Jesus gave to him. [Another boy or girl should now read St. Luke xix. 1-10.]

Can anyone tell me what the two blessings were? Everyone doesn't seem quite sure, so I shall ask someone to read two verses again; then I think everyone will see [verses 6 and 8 to be read again].

Now, what were the blessings? Joy, yes, joy; that was one. And the other? [Someone will almost certainly say confession or repentance.] Yes, that is one way we might put it. But we could put it this way too, couldn't we? We could say that Jesus gave him power to see how ugly his life had been, and gave him power, too, to see how to begin to make it better? And something more as well, I think.

Do you imagine it was easy for Zacchæus to stand up before all those people and say what he did? No, I am sure it wasn't. But Jesus gave him courage to do it, and I am sure He gave Zacchæus courage to keep on trying to do better, and that the rest of this man's life was very different from what it had been before.

(4) LIGHT IN DARKNESS

Well, ever since those days and right down to our own time, Jesus has been giving people the same kind of power to see that He gave Zacchæus, and great changes have come about in the world because of this.

There is only time left now for me to tell you about one of these changes, but that will be enough to fill out one of many pictures that could be made of Jesus as the Light of the World, bringing power to see things as they are, with the eyes of our mind, and courage to do right and joy in the doing.

You all know, I think, that when Jesus came on earth there were many thousands of slaves, and nobody thought there was anything wrong in making slaves of men and

women and boys and girls. People just took it for granted that, if you were rich enough to buy and keep slaves, it was quite all right to do so. But by degrees, as Christian people thought over what Jesus said about calling God "*Our Father*," they came to see that all the people in the world are dear to God, and that we ought to think of them as brothers and sisters, and to treat them as we should ourselves like to be treated, and that it is wrong to make any of them into slaves. Jesus has enabled His followers to see or understand that slavery is wrong, and He has given them courage to face a great deal of opposition and to work hard for the freeing of slaves, so that nowadays it is only in places where the light of the knowledge of Him has not yet shone with real brightness that there are any slaves, and we hope it will not be long before slavery will be quite done away.

And now, between this Sunday and next, I want you to think very specially about this—that Jesus is ready to bring light into each of our lives, if we will let Him do so. If we really want to do what is right, and look to Him or ask Him to help us, He will help us to see quite clearly what *is* right. If we need courage to carry it out, He will help us to have courage, and if we are willing to have Him for our Friend and Leader and Captain, He will give us joy and happiness in our hearts, so that we shall be like lamps, lit up with light from Him, to brighten the lives of those around us.

11. THE KINGDOM NEAR AT HAND

J. B. GRIFFIN

Thy kingdom come.—St. Luke xi. 2.

(1) THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD

EVERY boy and girl in the land knows the name of the King of England. He is called King Edward the Eighth, and that reminds us that there were seven other Edwards before him who were Kings of England too. History teaches us about many kings and queens; about their countries and the armies and navies with which they were defended. At the present time there are very few kingdoms of this world remaining. Some countries are called Republics with a President at the head, like France and the United States of America, while others are governed by Dictators, like Germany and Italy. We still have our king, and because he is a true leader and loves his people, we pray that he may long live to reign over us.

(2) THE KINGDOM OF LOVE

God has His Kingdom too. He came into the world to make one for Himself. Do you remember reading about it in the first chapter of St. Mark's Gospel? When John the Baptist was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. It was to be a very different kind of kingdom from those which the world had ever known. There was no palace for the King, no armies to defend Him, no boundary to His empire. It

began with Jesus, the King, standing in the open and saying, "The Kingdom of God is at hand." "I am here. Repent of your sins and believe the good news which I have come to tell you." From that beginning the Kingdom of God began to grow, as men and women, one after another, joined themselves to Jesus and became the subjects of the Kingdom.

Many of His followers thought that one day, when Jesus had gathered a strong force around Him, He would organise an army, raise His standard and drive the Roman armies out of the Holy Land. This idea, however, was never in His thoughts. The new kind of Kingdom was to be one of love, and not of force. Jesus believed that the King who ruled by love would draw all good people to Him, and that they would live happily in brotherly love together with Him. Many of His fellow-countrymen laughed at this idea of a kingdom. They said that it could never succeed. Others, especially the rulers of the Jews, were afraid that it would succeed, and they feared that the new King would destroy their power over the people. So they plotted to kill Jesus. After much difficulty they persuaded Pilate, the Roman Governor, to crucify Him. Then they began to laugh too, for they thought that this was the end of the new King and His Kingdom. But Jesus died upon the Cross with a true motto set over His head—"This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." His enemies did not like this title, written in three languages for all the world to read. The chief Priests asked Pilate to alter it to read "He said, I am the King of the Jews," but Pilate answered them, "What I have written I have written," and he refused to alter it.

You all know the wonderful end of that story. How Jesus rose again the third day; how He showed Himself to His friends; how He ascended into heaven and sent His Holy Spirit to build up the Kingdom of love in all the world, through them.

(3) THE INHERITORS OF THE KINGDOM

And here we are to-day, members of Christ the King, with the same Holy Spirit working in us, in order that we may carry on the good work of strengthening and extending the Kingdom of God.

"The Kingdom of God": What does that mean to you and me?

When we think of the Kingdom of God do our thoughts carry us out across the seas to the places where the Gospel is being preached, or to highest heaven where the Lord Jesus is proclaimed King of kings? It is right to think of the Kingdom in those ways, but we need not look so far away. When we think of the Kingdom which our Lord wants us to build for Him we need not look further than ourselves and those with whom we live and work and play. "The Kingdom of God is within you," said our Lord. If it is there, it can come wherever we may be. Have you ever thought what the Kingdom of God would be like on a football field? Let us think about it.

There is the field with the green grass marked with white lines; the goals at each end; the stands for the onlookers. All is ready for the game. God is to be the King; here is the Kingdom, and everyone who enters the field will be a subject of His Kingdom. There are the players, twenty-two of them, good men and true, a referee, two linesmen and a host of spectators. The game is played, and these are the signs of the Kingdom of God. Every player plays for his side, and not for himself; he plays his best with courage and with zeal. The referee and linesmen give their decisions without fear or favour; each is as fair as it is possible for him to be. The onlookers applaud good play on whatever side it may be. The winners take their victory with modesty, and the losers accept their defeat in good part. Such a game could only take place where people love their

neighbours as themselves, and that is only another way of saying that the Kingdom of God is within them—in their hearts and in their minds.

So, if the Kingdom of God is within us, we shall be able to build up the Kingdom in our homes and where we work, as well as in the places where we play. To do this we must forget about ourselves and the things which we want to do. In our homes we shall be cheerful and happy; ready to help others in every way we can. At school, as in the home, we shall be obedient and truthful, we shall work hard at our lessons and play hard in our games.

But if we are to do all this, God must be our King. He must rule our thoughts, and give us power to do His will. To Him, then, we must go for guidance and for help. There He is within you. All that is best in you is His. Speak to Him often in the Lord's own prayer, and as you do so think of the Kingdom which you are trying to build for Him; soon you will find that the Lord's Prayer will have a new meaning for you, because you know what you mean when you say, "Thy Kingdom come."

12. A CHRISTIAN'S HANDS

F. PATON-WILLIAMS

He showed them His hands.—St. Luke xxiv. 40.

(1) INTRODUCTION

I AM going to ask you to do a somewhat unusual thing. I want you to look at your hands.

Have you ever noticed how perfectly they are made? You only realise how useful each part of the hand is when, shall we say, one finger is injured and the poor little bandaged thing seems always in the way. You never knew how much you used it till you hurt it.

(2) OUR HANDS

If ever you have attempted to draw the human figure, you will have discovered that the hand is one of the most difficult things to sketch. Many a good picture has been spoilt by the hands being badly drawn or badly placed. Have you ever been to the photographer, and noticed how, after he has fixed you, he so often comes back again and lifts your hand, placing it in this position or in that, until he is satisfied?

The same thing is true in the use of the hand by actors, preachers and speakers. When you begin to speak or to act, you never know what to do with your hands. They feel twice their size and get in the way. Watch a nervous speaker; he will twiddle a watch chain, twirl a pencil, grip the lapels of his coat or twist something into unrecognisable

shapes—all because he has never learnt to use his hands correctly.

If you study a person's hand, you will very soon be able to learn a very great deal about that person. Some of the boys will remember how their old friend, Sherlock Holmes, could tell by glancing at the hands of the person who came to see him what that person's occupation was, and it is great fun, when you have nothing else to do in a tram or in a train, and have to sit opposite to a lot of people you don't know, to study their hands and try to make out what sort of people they are and the type of work they do.

Or take the ordinary handshake. As a rule, boys and girls don't shake hands without feeling a little awkward about it; but as you grow older you will learn, by shaking hands, far more about a person than you can know in any other way. We all know the strong grip of the faithful friend the soft, flabby handshake of the lazy and selfish person, or the handshake of the man or woman pretending to be something they are not, when they offer you the tips of their fingers. If you practise, you will soon learn much about a person by merely shaking hands with him.

(3) HANDS IN THE BIBLE

Now, I wonder if you have realised what an important place the hand seems to have in the Bible. Let me take one illustration. The Psalmist asks the question, "Who is fit to enter into God's holy place?" and the answer is "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart." Now, by clean hands it does not mean simply that the hand is to be free from the dirt that we must wash off so constantly, particularly if we live in great cities. There are other things which soil the hands besides grime and soot.

Have you ever realised that nearly all the evil that men do is done by the hand? Murder, theft, forgery, cruelty,

drunkenness, are only a few of those evil things which always use the hand to achieve their purpose. It is the hand that strikes the angry blow, the hand that takes the thing that does not belong to it, and when we enter into God's holy place and put our hands together in that salute to God which we make in prayer, we have to ask ourselves a question. "Have these hands done anything this week which has so soiled them that they are not fit to enter into God's holy place?"

In the service of the Holy Sacrament there is one point where the priest washes his fingers, and as he does so, he repeats very quietly to himself the words "I will wash my hands in innocency." It is a beautiful symbolic action, to remind us that we can only enter into God's holy place with clean hands.

But if it is true that the hand does most of the evil things, it is equally true that it does the good things in life. The hand placed on the head in blessing as at your confirmation, the hand which carries the heavy load for someone else, or leads a blind man across the street.

(4) WHAT A HAND CAN DO

And that brings me to another text that I want to remind you of: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

It is wonderful what a hand can do by a little training, and a good many of us fail to do half as much as we might in life, because we have never trained our hands to do little things extraordinarily well.

When you read the wonderful story of the life of Christ, you get some interesting accounts of how He used His hands. Those hands that had learnt how useful they might be at a carpenter's bench—and I am perfectly sure that anything He made was well made—turned in later life to be

the most wonderful hands the world has ever known. When He left the carpenter's bench, you find that again and again He uses those hands, not to hurt, but always to heal people.

Only once did He use them to hurt, and that was when He lashed out of the Temple Court those who had desecrated it. You will find all through the Bible that it is "the hand of God" that is against them that do evil, but God's hand is always outstretched to help those who are trying to do well. He touched the blind eyes, the withered arm, the leper's body, and even the dead.

When Peter was sinking in the sea, Christ stretched forth His hand to save him; that same hand which took bread and brake it, took wine and blessed it and gave it, for all time, to you and me, to be received in our hands at our Communion. When they killed Him they nailed those hands to the Cross. They never stopped to think how kind those beautiful hands had been. Even at the hour of His arrest He had used them to touch the wounded ear of the High Priest's servant. And so we sing

"See from His head, His hands, His feet
Sorrow and love flow mingled down."

Now, to me the most interesting thing is that when Jesus rose from the dead, and when he wanted to make Himself known to His friends, He showed them His hands, and, in the centre of those hands, were the nail-prints of Sacrifice and Service. And do you remember that beautiful story of how one morning after His Resurrection, when some very tired, disappointed, spray-soaked fishermen were making for the land, they saw Jesus standing on the shore awaiting them, and with those hands He had made a camp-fire and boiled some fish for their breakfast?

You see, even cooking a breakfast is part of the great service which the hand can do, and I like to think of those

sacred hands gathering the sticks and lighting the fire in the dawn of that morning.

I said at the beginning that you may know a man by his hands, and Jesus proved that to be true. So in future, whenever you look at your hands, I hope you will remember that you can carry your character in them. If you keep them clean, and use them with all your might in doing good, you will never be ashamed or afraid of showing them to Jesus, if He should ask you so to do.

13. THINKING AND THANKING

B. P. ROBIN

His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.—
Revelation, i. 16.

THAT is how one of the friends of Jesus describes the face of Jesus. Jesus is sometimes called “the Man of Sorrows.” He had a lot of sorrows, as you know. I wonder why it is that, in spite of that, His face was always full of light?

(1) MR. FIDDLE-FACE

If you were to look at your geography book, and put down on a piece of paper the number of people living in each of the countries in the world, and then add them all up, I believe the answer would come to somewhere about sixteen hundred millions. And they say that every one of them has a face different from all the others, and that even twins are never quite exactly alike. There are people with round faces and people with square faces, people with long faces and people with short faces, people with yellow faces and with black or brown or white faces, as well as different-shaped noses and different-coloured eyes.

But though they are all so different, yet you might say that there are only two different *kinds* of faces—faces like suns, and faces like fiddles. If you think of the long, sad, hollow-cheeked sort of face a fiddle has, you won’t take long to decide whether you would rather be Mr. Fiddle-Face or Mr. Sun-Face.

What is it that makes the difference between those two

kinds of faces? It isn't really their shape. It isn't the colour of their eyes. It isn't the colour of their skins. It is the colour of their *thoughts*. Some people seem to go about the world thinking only of all the things that make life miserable: about what a pain they have in their toe, or how much more money the person next door has than they have. And it does not take many thoughts of that colour to give you a face like a fiddle! But if, instead of that, you start counting up each evening the things you have enjoyed during the day, things you've seen or things you've heard or things you've done, you very soon begin to have a face like a sun.

I once asked a class of country children on a summer morning whether they could think of anything they liked the *smell* of. I thought they'd all say "Roses." And I saw a small boy with his eyes shining and his face all lit up—just like a sun—and his hand stuck up in the air. So I said, "Yes, Sam?" And in a hoarse voice he said, "Roast 'taters!" Well, I don't suppose Sam's eyes shone much while he was eating them; but when Sam's mind began to think, Sam's face began to shine—like a sun.

(2) THINK—THANK

And when you begin to think, you find you want to begin to thank too. But when you begin to think, there are so many hundreds of things to thank for, that you'd never finish: things that you never stop to think about, like reading a good story in a book, or watching a swallow skim above the water, or the jolly feeling you have on a spring morning, or just the fact that God keeps the world going round to bring to-morrow here.

Just suppose He didn't—didn't keep things going as they are. Suppose He went to sleep for an hour or two, and let things slide.

Suppose you went out one starry night, and looked up

and found that Orion had got all out of his track and was chasing the Great Bear, and that stars were crashing into each other all over the sky. Suppose you went out in the morning and found that your roses had gone dark grey, turned into the shape of beer-bottles, and smelt of cheese. Suppose the birds suddenly took to making noises like motor-horns. Suppose the grass had turned blue, and the sky had turned green!

For just about half a minute it might be funny, mightn't it? But if it went on, you would want to stop your ears and shut your eyes and hold your nose and shout "Stop it!" If God stopped keeping things as they are, it would be like a nightmare, wouldn't it?

So, when you kneel down at night to say your prayers, don't begin by asking God for what you haven't got. *Begin by praising Him for what you have got.* Count up on your fingers—only you'll need more fingers than ten—some of the "things as they are" that make you happy.

Think—and thank.

And here's another thing. While you're thinking and thanking, you'll probably remember that it isn't only *things* that make you happy. It is people too. We've done a lot of supposing, so let's do one more. Just suppose that all the people (not only all the people you don't know or don't like, but all the people you *do* like) suddenly vanished, and you were left quite alone with nothing but "things." That would be a nightmare too, wouldn't it?

So let's be quiet now for a quarter of a minute, and each see how many people you can think of who help to make you happy. . . . Have you thought? Right! Now I'm prepared to bet I can tell you one person that most of you haven't thought of—Jesus Christ.

I expect some of you are thinking, "Well, I don't see that He's got much to do with my being happy." Well, now, listen.

I've got a great friend who for many years was a missionary among the islands in the Pacific Ocean. The missionaries there go about in boats from one island to another. And, because there are a lot of bad diseases in those islands, many of the missionaries are trained to be doctors too, so that they can both preach the Gospel and heal the sick.

Well, my friend landed one day at an island, and the people at the village told him that there was a man in one of the huts so ill that they thought he was dying. So my friend went to see the man, and he felt his pulse and looked at his tongue and did all the other things that the doctor does to you to find out what's the matter. And as far as he could see, there wasn't anything the matter with him at all. And yet he could see clearly enough that the man was dying. Well, my friend thought for a minute, and then he went out and talked to some of the villagers. And he very soon found out what the man was dying of. He was dying of *fright*. Now, that makes some of you laugh, because you can't imagine any one being really "frightened to death." We'll come back to that in a minute. Meanwhile I'll tell you how it happened. Someone who hated the man had gone to the village witch-doctor and paid him money to put a charm on the man. And the witch-doctor had made a charm (I should like to tell you how he did it, only there isn't time), and then he had gone to the man and told him he was charmed, and that God was going to kill him.

Now, my friend was a very big man—over six feet high—and very strong, and there wasn't much time to waste, because the man was dying. So he went to the witch-doctor's hut, and took the witch-doctor by the scruff of the neck and said, "You've put a charm on that man, and he's dying. If he dies, *you are going to die too*. Now you will come with me to his house, and you'll tell him that you've taken the charm off him, and that he is going to get well."

It was the witch-doctor's turn to be frightened then,

and it wasn't long before he did what he was told. And to cut a long story short, the next time my friend went to that island, the man who had been dying was quite well and working in his garden.

Now then, when *you* hear that story, you laugh. You say, "What silly nonsense! Fancy a man dying of fright! And God doesn't kill people anyhow." You're right. Of course He doesn't. But—how is it that *you* know He doesn't? How is it that *you* can laugh at the very idea of a man dying of fright?

You know the answer. It is because *you* are a Christian. It is because all through your life you've known that God's love and care are round you every day. And it was Jesus who showed us that, by the things He did and the things He said and the things He was. It is He who makes you able to laugh instead of being afraid. So if you live in happiness instead of fear, if you are Mr. Sun-Face and not Mr. Fiddle-Face, it is largely thanks to Jesus Christ.

So when you kneel down in the evening, and when you've thought and thanked for the *things* that make you happy, and the *people* who make you happy, thank God for Jesus Christ as well.

(3) THE CABBAGE CHORUS

But there is another way of praising God, besides kneeling down and saying thank you. I was talking about this once to some boys, and I said, "Do cabbages praise God?"

They all laughed, and then one of them said, "Yes, but not in our language." I think he was right. Things and animals don't kneel down at night and say thank you. But they do praise God. What is their language?

That is easy to answer in some cases. If I asked you, "How does a thrush praise God?" You would say at once,

"By his song." But if I said, "Well, a swallow hasn't got much of a song. How does he praise God?" you might not find it quite so easy. But if you have watched a swallow, and seen how he loves swooping, diving, skimming, you'd very soon say "He praises God by flying." And if you remember our nightmare about the roses that looked like dark grey beer-bottles, and smelt like cheese, you will see that a flower has three lovely languages to praise God in—his shape, his colour and his scent. And if you remember our nightmare about the stars, you will see how they praise God—by shining as He meant them to and moving as He meant them to.

And that is the answer to the question about the cabbage. All things and all animals praise God by being what He meant them to be and doing what He meant them to do.

Now, that's all very nice and easy for the things and the animals, because God has made them as they are, and they can't be any different. They haven't any choice in the matter. But people aren't like that. God made people free to choose. And if you think, you'll find that all through your life God has never once *made* you do anything.

Your praise will make Him happy, because it will make you happy. But you don't *have* to praise Him. If you insist on being miserable, He won't stop you. You don't *have* to be what He meant you to be. And of all the people who ever lived in all the world, there has been only one who was quite perfectly happy, because there has been only one who was just exactly what God meant men to be.

That one was Jesus Christ. He praised God in every minute of His life, in the same way that birds and flowers and stars praise God—by being and doing just what God meant men to be and do. But, unlike them, He did it of His own free-will. His whole life was one great act of praise. He was happy, and He is happy still.

You remember how one of His friends described His face.

“ His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.” And another of His friends said that His face was full of “ the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.” And I don’t think He would mind if I said, “ Jesus is Mr. Sun-Face.”

But you might say, “ Well, I can’t make myself like Him.” No, you can’t. But He can. He is the same to-day as He was then. And Christianity does not mean you making yourself like Christ, but Christ making you like Himself. And He has begun to do that already. When you were baptized, He began to send His life flowing into you. Each time you pray He gives you a bit more of Himself. When you are confirmed He’ll give you more still. And afterwards, in the Holy Communion, you will give yourself to Him and He will give Himself to you, until your life too grows bit by bit into what God meant all lives to be, and becomes full of happiness because it’s full of praise.

14. THE FINEST ARMOUR IN THE WORLD

AN IMAGINARY BROADCAST

E. W. GEDGE

Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.—
Ephesians vi. 10.

(1) INTRODUCTION

I EXPECT all of you at some time or other, when you have been listening to the wireless, have heard the announcer say, "And now we are taking you over for a running commentary."

Perhaps it has been to the roof of the Stadium at Wembley, for a description of the Cup Final; or maybe to the little launch "Magician," somewhere on the river Thames between Putney and Barnes Bridges, on the day of the Oxford and Cambridge Boat-race; or perhaps it was to Windsor Castle on that day when the whole world heard a description of the scene when the body of King George was laid to rest. Wherever it was, you knew that at the other end was a man with a microphone describing all that he saw, in such a way that although you were sitting at home comfortably in arm-chairs, you felt as though you were really there, and were able to see and hear all that was going on.

To-day I want you to listen to another kind of "Running Commentary," or perhaps it would be better to call it an eye-witness account. Your share will be to use your imagination just as you do when you listen in.

To begin with, then, imagine that this pulpit is really one of those little huts which the B.B.C. are so fond of using for their "Outside Broadcasts," and that this book-rest is the

microphone and that I am the commentator. Now I want you to do something that even the Wireless, wonderful as it is, has not been able to do yet, and that is to turn the clock back nearly 1900 years and imagine that it is the year A.D. 62.

(2) A COURTYARD OF A DWELLING-HOUSE IN ROME

And now listen: "I am speaking from the Imperial City of Rome, capital of the great Roman Empire. From where I am standing I can look across a white-walled courtyard to a pillared verandah of a house on the far side. Up and down the courtyard paces a soldier, clad in the full armour of the Roman army. His breastplate shines in the bright sunshine; his helmet is on his head; in his hand he carries a sword, whilst against a wall rests his shield. It is the great shield which every Roman soldier carries, and which, when locked together with the shields of his comrades, forms a wall against which the hordes of barbarians charge in vain with their spears, a shield which can be held over their heads to form a shelter when they are being attacked from the walls of a beleaguered city with stones and darts and arrows.

"On the verandah of the house I see two men. The younger is seated at a table, and in front of him is a long parchment scroll on which he is writing, whilst the other walks up and down, now stopping and now starting and, as he does so, I can hear him speaking to the other. It looks as though he is dictating a letter—I can almost catch what he is saying, what was that? Yes, I distinctly caught the words, 'Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord.'

"So he must be getting to the end of the letter, for a great part of the scroll is written already. And now he stops for a moment, as though he is thinking how he shall end, and, as he does so, he catches sight of the soldier, and that evidently

gives him the idea he wants. For I see him now turning to the young man, and I can hear him saying write this: 'Put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.' . . .

"Has anyone guessed yet who it is who is dictating the letter, the greatest missionary the world has ever known? Yes, St. Paul. But what is he doing here in Rome, and why is this soldier on guard outside the house?

"He has come to Rome, as a prisoner, to claim his right as a citizen of the Roman Empire to have his case judged by Cæsar himself, and to answer before him the charges which the Jews have brought against him of attacking their religion and their law. For two years he has been kept in prison at Cæsarea; twice he was been tried, but nothing can be proved against him, and at last, despairing of receiving justice before the Governor, Festus, and threatened with being sent back to Jerusalem, where he knows he would be murdered by the Jews, Paul claims his right to have his case heard by Cæsar himself. 'I appeal to Cæsar—unto Cæsar thou shalt go . . .'

"So that is why he is here in Rome, a prisoner, but allowed to live in a hired house of his own, while he waits for his trial by Nero. But although Paul is a prisoner, he is still a missionary. Day by day visitors come to him—Christians from the city, others from farther afield who have come along the great Roman roads to do business in the capital, and Paul helps and encourages them all; often he talks with the soldiers of the guard and tells them of his great Captain, the Lord Jesus, for whose sake he is a prisoner.

"One day a runaway slave comes to him for help and advice, and Paul, who knows the slave's master, who is a Christian, sends him back with a letter asking that for his sake he will forgive and receive the slave back. We have that letter to-day in our New Testament; it is called the Epistle to Philemon, and in it we find the name of the slave,

Onesimus. But Paul is writing an even more important letter—so important that several copies are going to be made of it, and then sent to the different Churches that Paul has visited in the past, on his missionary travels. We are going to see where one of these copies was sent.”

(3) THE TEMPLE OF THE GODDESS DIANA

“I am speaking now from the chief city of the Roman province of Asia.

“In front of me stands a great temple, with tall rows of pillars and flights of steps leading up to a great doorway, through which crowds of people are passing in to worship the heathen goddess Diana, whose idol stands within, an ugly black stone that was supposed to have fallen from Jupiter. This temple is so famous that it has become known as one of the seven wonders of the world. Pilgrims come from all over the province to make their offerings to the goddess in the temple and join the annual games and revelries of this heathen city. Has anyone guessed the name of the city? Diana was the goddess of the Ephesians, and this is the great city of Ephesus—renowned not only for its temple, but also for its wicked magic and witchcraft.

“In the courtyard of the temple I can see the little stalls where the sellers of shrines and images of the great goddess, and also silversmiths are plying a busy trade amongst the pilgrims. But business is not so good as it used to be. Several years back, Paul and his fellow-missionary, Timothy, came to this great city, and for two years they taught the people the Gospel of Jesus Christ, so that many worshipped the true God, and no longer brought their offerings to the temple nor bought the shrines and images from the silversmiths.

“In fact, on one great day in this very square in front of the temple, a large bonfire was made, and many of the

heathen magicians, who had learned through Paul to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, burnt their charms and books of magic, whilst the Christians sang praises to God. But it is no easy thing to be a Christian in this great heathen city. It means hardship and danger, and sometimes even death itself.

"Sometimes these Christian converts feel lonely and afraid, and often they wish that their beloved Paul would come and visit them again, but alas! this can not be, for he is held a captive in Rome, and so as he cannot come to them, he does the next best thing, and sends them one of the copies of the letter which we saw and heard him dictating, to encourage and to strengthen them."

(4) THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS

"Now listen again: It is the first day of the week, and the Christians of Ephesus are gathered together for prayer and worship and praise. As I watch, I see first one and then another pray aloud, men and women both taking part. Now someone is standing up and telling us how God has helped him to conquer some sin or temptation, and all the Christians join in praising God. Now a mother is telling how her child who has been ill has been healed by God in answer to her prayers.

"But now there is a sudden hush, and someone, who looks as though he must be a leader among the rest, stands up and in his hands he holds a scroll.

"Why, it is the very letter we saw Paul dictating in Rome, which has been brought by the hands of his fellow-missionary Tychichus to the Church in Ephesus; and now the leader reads, whilst they all listen intently: 'Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord

Jesus Christ.' Then the letter goes on to remind them of God's wonderful love for them, and how He loved them even before, in the beginning, he created the heavens and the earth, and how Jesus Christ came to reveal God's love to all mankind, to Jew and Gentile alike. Because of all this, the letter goes on, 'Remember that you are called to serve God; don't go on living like the heathen Ephesians do, in sin and wickedness. Stop telling lies and speak the truth. Be honest and refrain from stealing. Don't be angry with one another, but be kind and forgiving, remembering that God has forgiven you for Christ's sake.'

"Then as I watch and listen I hear messages being read out to the different groups of people who are members of the church. There are boys and girls among the congregation, and St. Paul has not forgotten them. 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth.'

"And now it is a message for the parents: 'And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.' I can see, in this company of Christians, that some are rich, but far more are poor; some are masters, but far more are slaves or servants, and I hear two more special messages being read from the letter for them: 'Servants, be obedient to them that according to the flesh are your masters . . . with goodwill doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening; knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven.'

"And now I can hear words being read which seem familiar, those words which I heard Paul dictating, when

his eye caught the glint of the sun on the armour of the Roman soldier, and he remembered that he and his fellow-Christians were pledged to serve as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. The end of the letter brings a message for all of them—boys and girls, fathers and mothers, masters and servants, all alike.

“ ‘ Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.’ ”

(3) HOW TO BE STRONG

“ Be strong.” They needed to be that, if they were to be true followers of Jesus in that great heathen city of Ephesus, where they were attacked by every wile of the devil, often mocked at and persecuted by their fellow-townsmen.

“ Be strong.” Yes, but often they felt very weak and tempted to give way. Paul understood—he had felt just like that himself many a time, when he was tempted and in danger, and so he reminds them that they are not alone, for they have all the power of God with them; as soldiers of Jesus Christ they have the finest armour in the world with which to fight against evil. The Breast-Plate of Righteousness; The Shield of Faith; The Sword of the Spirit—which is the word of God—The Helmet of Salvation.

With such strong weapons they will be victorious over sin and evil, just as the Roman army, clad in its matchless armour, vanquished the barbarian hordes, who came against them armed with darts, spears and arrows.

But not only the Christians in Ephesus are called upon to “ Be strong ” and put on the armour of God. Everyone of us, at our baptism, was pledged as a Christian soldier, to fight manfully under Christ’s banner against sin, the world and the devil, and to continue his faithful soldiers and servants unto our lives’ end. We, too, need to be strong and

put on the whole armour of God, if we are to conquer sin and evil. The call is to us as well as them.

“Soldiers of Christ arise, and put your armour on”; and if we obey like Paul and the Christians of old, we shall find that he “who in the strength of Jesus trusts, is more than conqueror.”

15. CAN YOU TELL A SECRET?

PHYLLIS DENT

(1) A QUESTION

THE other day I visited a missionary exhibition. The room was so arranged that we were able to visit in imagination the houses of many of the different peoples of this earth. Each court in the exhibition represented the living-room of Japanese, Chinese, Egyptian, Indian, or primitive African tribes and many others. In nearly all these rooms there was a little shrine for prayer and worship, different according to the religion of each different country.

As I went from one shrine to another, I said to myself, "Human beings cannot help believing in God; just as their eyes tell them that trees and flowers grow on this earth, so another part of their nature tells them: 'There is a God.' " But as I looked at some of the pictures and images placed on these shrines I did not feel quite so happy. These people may believe in God, but their thoughts about Him seem very strange!

Ever since human beings began to feel, "There must be God somewhere," their minds have asked a very important question: "What is God like?" If you hear that your form at school is going to have a new master, of course you ask, "What is he like?" and if you are going away to spend holidays with people whom you have never seen before, of course you say, "I wonder what they are like?" and of course when human beings felt the nearness of Some One whom they could not see with their bodily eyes or touch with their bodily hands, they said, "I wonder what He is like?"

(2) FIRST ANSWERS

Every religion in the world—the strange religions of far-off olden days and the religions which we find in the world now—is the effort to answer the questions which we have just been thinking about.

Now let us do a very hard thing, and *really* use our imagination. Let us put ourselves into the place of men and women who had no Bible like ours, and had never heard any of the stories about God with which we are so familiar. We can imagine that they felt that God must be great and strong and powerful, and they pictured to themselves a great strong bull: a creature able to trample them and ride over them. So they said to themselves, "God is strong like this creature," and they worshipped Him with the picture of the bull before their eyes.

But that could not satisfy them for very long. They were bound to begin to feel: "God must be more like us than He is like an animal." So they thought of Him as a great strong king sitting on a throne: the sort of king who could draw his sword and kill his enemies. Even the Hebrews in olden days had this picture in their minds, when they worshipped God. "A great king who can do as He likes and who may be persuaded to kill my enemies for me," was often the answer which they gave to the question: "what is God like?"

The Hebrews had learnt many true things about God. They found that they were worshipping the same God when they were away in Babylon as they worshipped in the Temple in Jerusalem.

So they came to realise that there is one God who rules the whole earth "Hast thou not known?" they cried, "hast thou not heard that the Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary? . . . He is strong in power."

But they could not get away from the idea that power means power to control by force, power to make other people do things, power to destroy them if they won't obey, and this meant that they had still got the wrong answer to the question: "What is God like?"

(3) THE RIGHT ANSWER

Sometimes when you go to a play at the theatre or to a film at the pictures you see on the programme or screen these words: "Interval of many years." It would be a good thing now, to sit back in our seats, close our eyes and keep quite still trying to listen with the ears of our mind to a great cry going up from the heart of human beings, "O that I knew where I might find Him." What indeed is our God like?"

Let us try it now.

[Pause for about ten seconds.]

Open your eyes. Our film has reached its second reel. Another answer is coming to the great question. Now what are the pictures on the reel? Watch and see! But it will be a "talking picture." There will be sounds and words. Listen and hear!

(4) OUR LORD: JESUS OF NAZARETH

The first picture shows us a helpless Baby lying in a rough stone manger in a stable in Bethlehem. It is telling the story of something that actually happened nearly two thousand years ago. The sound is a song—a glorious chorus of song: "Glory to God in the Highest and on earth, peace, goodwill towards men." You can guess what will be the pictures to follow that: The Child Jesus in the Temple at the age of twelve saying to His Mother, "I must be about my Father's business." The Man Jesus baptised in the

river Jordan, spending forty days of retreat and prayer in the wilderness, then coming forth to choose His disciples and to spend long hours of every day in teaching and healing and helping all who come to Him.

Some of the pictures on our film will show Him surrounded by listening crowds. He is teaching them and answering their questions. One thing He says startles us and makes us long to kneel down and worship Him. Listen to His words: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

Men asked: "What is God like?" and now we have the answer in language which we can understand. "God is like Jesus." God became man so that we could look at Him and touch Him and listen to Him. Men of old said, "O that I knew where I might find Him!" We have found Him now. We find Him in Jesus.

Now you can see how men's thoughts about God began to change. They knew He was powerful, but they thought that His power was like the strength of a fierce animal or like the strength of a king who has in his own hands the power of life and death. Now they are looking, as they gaze on the Lord Jesus, at God's kind of power. God's kind of power can never be defeated, because it is the power of love, and nothing at all anywhere can stop Him from loving. He loved the world so much that He came to earth as Man. He loved men and women so much that He spent His time in saving them from disease and ignorance, and when men who were evil hated His goodness and tried to stop him from doing good, He simply loved them and said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The last set of pictures on our film begins with the Crucifixion. "We will kill Him and that will be the end," His enemies said. He allowed them to kill Him because He would not leave off loving them. So He died. But we cannot kill God, and we cannot kill love. He rose again.

That is the last picture we will look at. Jesus Christ has risen again. Allelulia!

Now we have looked at God in the face of Jesus Christ, and we have heard Him say: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

When God became Man, He used something that we can see and touch and handle. He used our bodily nature, and He did all the things which we do. He ate, and slept, and climbed the hills, and gathered the flowers, and watched children at play. Now, for Christians all these things are different. They belong to God and they are full of the happiness which God makes.

(5) THE SECRET OF THE TOYS

There is an old story told about a toy-maker who made more wonderful toys than anybody else. When one of the dolls, made by him, arrived at any house, that house began to be happier and all his toys seemed to bring joy and happiness with them wherever they were received. This was because, when he made them, he took a little bit of his own heart and put it into them. He gave them a heart, in its tiny degree, like his own, and so they took his heart and his spirit with them.

The Toy-maker used to say!—

"But each little doll I sell
I give it a heart as well
I make a hole there
Put a soul there
When you walk with it
You may talk with it.

"Can you keep a secret?
I wonder if you can
My toys are all enchanted
I'm a wise magician man."

I've told you the secret of the toys. Do you know God is

like the toy-maker. The Coming of God to earth in the birth of the Lord Jesus has put a heart into all the ordinary things of earth. Our homes are meant to be happier because of it, our games are meant to be merrier, our flowers and trees and hills more beautiful. Christians have got a secret.

“ Can you keep a secret?
I wonder if you can.
Our whole world is enchanted
By God becoming man.”

Do you see what I mean? The ordinary doings of life—the singing, the dancing, the games and the learning—are full of life and light because God Himself chose our earth to be His home. But we need not “ keep our secret ”—in fact, we must not keep it. If we know the answer to the question; “ What is God like? ” we must tell it to everyone. We must say to all the world, “ He that hath seen our Lord Jesus has seen the Father, he has looked at God and he knows what God is like.”

(6) “ TELLING OUR SECRET ”

Perhaps it seems to you a contradiction to say that we must “ tell our secret.” We feel that a secret is something that is not to be told.

Well, sometimes a great truth has to be a secret in our heart first, and then afterwards it must be told. The Lord Jesus said: “ He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father,” because one of His friends said “ Show us the Father.”

When you kneel down to pray to-night keep quite still for a few seconds and try to feel that you are looking at the Lord Jesus. Then whisper to Him, “ Lord, shew me the Father.” You will be looking at God in the Face of Jesus Christ.

Then get up in the morning, knowing that you will find

a "heart" in everything. All work is worth doing, all games are worth playing, all troubles are worth bearing and all people are worth loving. And perhaps other people will find that the Great Toy-maker has put His heart into you as well because, in your Baptism, you were made a member of the Christ who came to put His heart into the world when "for us then and for our salvation He came down from heaven."

16. "A TEMPLE MEET"

C. K. THACKER

If a man love Me, he will keep My word : and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.—St. John xiv. 23.

(1) INTRODUCTION

IF you are anything like me, you enjoy sometimes to be inside a great building, perhaps a picture-gallery, a Town Hall, but, most of all, one of our great cathedrals. How enormous they seem, how immense! If we are in a cathedral, for instance, and we allow our eyes to follow the columns up to where they merge with the roof vaulting, or look from the west door to where the altar stands in the sanctuary, how can we fail to marvel at all the thought and patience, at all the labour and perseverance which have gone to make this not only a massive, but a beautiful House of God? If we stay awhile, perhaps to say a prayer, and if it is an ancient church, does not the thought come to us, that here is a place where, perhaps for centuries, Christian folk have met for public prayer—aye, and private too, and where for centuries God has been worshipped in services of praise and thanksgiving

But we know also that, great as is God's desire to be worshipped in the congregation and at a time when all are met together in public worship, He also desires our praise and our prayers at other times too. We know also that God is everywhere, and to be met not only in churches, but also in our daily lives in the world outside. Further still, we know that He loves to reign in the very hearts of those who love

Him and believe in Him and who seek to serve Him here below. Yes, God is with us and desires a place in our hearts. Surely there is a need therefore that we prepare a place for Him, where He may dwell ; for as we see around us churches built for Him, where, in a way we know not, His Presence abides, so we in our hearts need to build a habitation for Him.

(2) THE GOSPEL PLAN OF OUR HOUSE

Now, if we have the mind to be builders of a place for God, we shall first of all need some idea of how we are to build, and of what sort of house we should attempt—we need, that is, a plan.

All builders, as you know, have a plan drawn up for them by architects, which tells them the size of each wall, where the windows will go, what material to use, and all sorts of things about the way to build the house. How fortunate we are that we have a plan ready made for us—the plan which we find in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There, in the records of His life, in the accounts of St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John, we may read about and study the perfect life of Jesus Christ, which He once lived on earth. His life gives us an example of what is possible for us ; it is a pattern into which we may try to mould our lives : it tells us in what direction we should build ; for it was meant to be a plan of how we should attempt to live.

(3) PREPARING THE GROUND BY PENITENCE

However much we like to ponder over the wonderful plan of our house which the life of Jesus affords to us, there is one thing certain : that He did not mean us to be for ever reading and considering His life, and never trying to put the things He said into practice. He meant us to be, as the Apostle says, "doers, as well as hearers, of the word."

So let us make a start on the building of His house. Off must come those coats, and those sleeves rolled up; for at the very beginning we have some of the toughest work of all. Those bushes, those entwining brambles, those prickly thorns and stinging-nettles must be cleared away. Those broken bottles must be removed. What a waste piece of ground it is that God has chosen for the dwelling-place in which He wants to come and live!

But do you see what we are doing when we are clearing the site for our house? We are undoing, and are putting right, that for which there is no one responsible but ourselves. All this refuse we have put there; all these brambles and thorns have grown through our neglect—they are our sins, and they must be cleared away. “How?” do I hear you say? “How do we get rid of sins?” Well, we cannot take them away by ourselves, only God can do that. But we can uproot them, we can, by being sorry for them and asking God to have mercy upon us and to forgive us our sins, have them taken away and forgiven by God. There is a lot about this in the plan which we are following; for did not Jesus die so that we might obtain, if we are penitent and believe in Him, full forgiveness, just as the Prodigal Son who turned again to his father in the story told by Jesus was forgiven his sins?

So let us clear the ground by repenting of the wrong actions and the evil thoughts we have done and have had, and let us resolve to do our best to live according to the plan which God has for us.

(4) LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH

Let us hasten to lay the foundation of our house while our ground is clear and clean. Away, then, to the quarries of the Christian Creeds and bring the great stones of the Christian Faith to be the foundations of our house, so that

it will not be as a house founded upon the sand, but that which is founded upon a rock.

How hard and solid, durable as the hills from which they were hewn are these stones we lay! Draw near and see, written on them, inscriptions such as: " I believe in God the Father Almighty," and on another, " I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord," on another, " I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life "; and there are many more which form the Faith of the Catholic Church of Christ and which we repeat when we recite the creeds of the Church. And so we shall bind these together and hold them fast to the ground with the cement of our own faith in them. The more we put our trust in God, the more Faith we have in Jesus and in His Church, the more secure will be foundations of our House for God. We shall do well, then, if, in our prayers, we make an act of faith such as this one, " My God, I believe in Thee and all that Thy Church doth teach; because Thou hast said it, and Thy word is true."

(5) RAISING THE WALLS OF HOPE

If we have our foundations of faith well and truly laid, then we are ready to begin the building of the walls.

As they mount upward stone by stone, what particular virtue do you think that they represent? Is it not Hope? What would happen if, when we had got well on in the work we were seized by the spirit of despair? Suppose we thought we should never be able to find enough material or enough time to finish; or, worse still, suppose we thought, for one moment, that our work was in vain, and that after we had toiled and laboured, God at the last would not ever enter it? Never let despair of this sort deter you, although there be those who will try to tell you that your work for Christ is in vain and that you are putting yourself to a needless sacrifice.

Perhaps you remember in that wonderful story of John

Bunyan what the name of Christian's companion, in the dungeon of Giant Despair, was. His name was Hopeful. And so, the whole time you work in building for God, labour in hope. It will be fatal if you give up hope. The house will soon fall into ruins if you stop building, and soon the ground will once more be given to briars and brambles, bottles and old tins. If we have founded our house on faith, the only material for the walls will be hope, and with this they will rise up to a great height. So in our prayers we may make this act of Hope, "My God, I hope in Thee for grace and for glory; because of Thy promises, Thy mercy, and Thy power."

(6) PLACING THE ROOF OF LOVE

The next thing, now, is the roof. Here we have a difficult task, and one which is going to call for all our energy and care.

How necessary the roof! Without it there would be no house. The rain would beat in; it would always be cold and damp inside, and the walls, without the protection which the roof gives, would soon fall down. So important is the roof that it must inevitably be that Love, which, we are told by St. Peter, covers a multitude of sins. The whole of the teaching of Jesus seems to be aimed at making people see that the chief duty of every man is to have a two-fold love: for God and for his neighbour. What a different place the world would be if every one obeyed, or even tried to obey, this Golden Rule which Jesus gave us! There would be no more war, no more cruelty, no more needless suffering. Instead of all the misery and sorrow of lives made unhappy by unkindness and the lack of love, there would be countless joyful and happy people, who, because they love God, love their neighbours also.

Yes, we must be sure to build the roof to our house, for

without it God will never enter, nor will He recognise it as built for Him, if it is not covered with the Roof of Love. In our prayers shall we not, then, make an act of Love, "My God, I love Thee with my whole heart; and for Thy sake I love my neighbour as myself?"

(7) BEAUTIFYING THE HOUSE WITH HOLINESS

If we have got thus far with the building of our house, we shall have done well; but there are additions in plenty that we may yet make.

Think of what glorious things we may put into it: windows of stained glass, through which the sun may come streaming and cast light of many colours on the walls of hope and along our floor of faith; carpets in the sanctuary; carvings of wood in the stalls, mouldings on the pillars and columns, tracery in the windows, though these would be done before we put them in their places; an organ to supply sweet sounds of music; pictures and hangings on the walls; flowers fresh and fragrant on the altar, for we shall have an altar where we may find God closest at precious times of prayer and communion.

Ours shall be the house beautiful; and its beauty shall be the beauty of holiness. Good thoughts and good actions—they will supply the wonder and the glory of our house. Every good thing we do, every right thought we think, will add some new beauty to our house, just as every bad thing and thought will make it more ugly, or every opportunity missed to do good will make an unsightly space appear.

If we would see how beautiful some people have been able to make their house, we have always the lives of the Saints. They can be to us examples of how we, by patience and courage and perseverance, and with the help of God, make our lives holy and well-pleasing in His sight. Some of the Saints were clever men, some quite ignorant and had never

been to school at all, some were women, some young, some old, some rich, some poor; but they all had this in common—that they had each built a house for God in their hearts, planned according to the Life Jesus in the Gospel, founded upon the Church's Faith, cemented with their own, raised in Hope, roofed with Love, and beautified by Holiness.

(8) CONCLUSION

Are you ready to be a builder for God? You will need great courage, great patience and great perseverance and yet the reward you receive will be greater. We have the promise of Jesus, "If a man love Me, he will keep my words; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." And it was probably this saying of Jesus of which John Keble was thinking, when he wrote the words of that hymn you perhaps know, and which might well be a prayer constantly upon our lips:

"Lord, we thy presence seek;
May ours this blessing be;
Give us a pure and lowly heart
A Temple meet for Thee."

17. HOW SIMON BECAME PETER

A. R. BROWNE-WILKINSON

When Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of John ; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone.—St. John i. 42.

(1) INTRODUCTION

IT seems to have been one of our Lord's habits to give His friends what we should call nicknames. More than one of His friends had this kind of name, and it always seems to me likely that it was Jesus who gave them. For example, it may well have been Jesus who called James and John the Thunder-Storms (Boanerges), because they were the kind of people who would suddenly burst out with excitement: or, perhaps, it was He who called Thomas Didymus or Twin. Anyhow, we are told for certain that it was He who said that Simon, whom we call St. Peter, should be called "The Rock"; for that is what Peter, or Cephas, means.

"Simon," He said, "your name is going to be Rock." And He meant something much more than "that is going to be your name." He meant, "that is going to be your character, and that is going to be your work." Jesus wanted a rock then, just as He wants rocks now. He wanted a rock, because He was going to build a great living building of men and women, a great company of people who should stand out in the world, fine and strong for the service of God, just as a great cathedral or parish church stands out in a city and village for the service of God. And the kind of person that would be useful for that kind of building would have to be a rock. A great rock would be the founda-

tion, and then the building would have to be completed with firm strong stones.

What kind of person would a rock-person have to be? Well, we can think very quickly of three things that a person like that would have to be.

(2) THE ROCK MUST BE RELIABLE

The rock must be reliable. Anything wobbly would be no good as a foundation or anywhere else in the building. A person who was never quite sure what he ought to do, or could not be relied upon to do it, even if he was told, would be no rock. Jesu Himself was like a rock: He was quite certain what to do, and did it at once without any argument or hesitation. You remember how He answered the devil, when the devil wanted to make Him wobble, when He was tempted in the desert. Three times over He gave a short, sharp answer. Each time it was "It is written" thus and thus. That is the way to be a rock-person, to know what God wants, and then not to argue, but to get on with it straight away.

Well, Jesus had to teach Simon this part of the business of becoming a rock, and there is a story of St. Peter which shows us how He did it.

It happened one morning, after Simon had spent the whole night fishing and had caught no fish. You will remember that story. Simon had come to land and was mending his nets, not I daresay in a very good temper. Jesus came down to the shore, and, first of all, he told Simon to do something that he could do and did do quite easily. He borrowed his boat to use as a kind of pulpit. Simon had to push it out a little way from the land, so that Jesus could speak to the people, who were lined up on the beach. That was easy. But then Jesus told Simon, who was no doubt tired after a night's work, to launch out again into the deep

waters and let down his nets and start fishing again—well, that was a bit too much! Simon started arguing. “What is the good of that?” he said. “I have been fishing all night: besides, this is not the time to fish—the night-time is the right time for that.” But just then something inside him seems to have told him that it would be better to do just what he was told. After all, he had said that he would be a follower and obey orders. So he did what he was told. And you will remember what followed. Jesus was right: the fish were there and Simon caught them. But he nearly missed them, by arguing and thinking that he knew best.

That was the beginning of learning that the best thing to do was to find out what Jesus wanted and to do it exactly. Later on we find that Peter had become the kind of firm, reliable person that Jesus could use when He wanted something difficult done, like sending him into Jerusalem to get ready the Passover, secretly, when the city was full of enemies who might have discovered Jesus’ plans unless they were carried out exactly. A rock-person does not argue when God gives orders. It is often rather difficult. We begin to wobble a bit and want to argue, “What is the good of it? why should not I do it this way? why should I do it at all?” God is always wanting us to be solid and firm people, who can be relied upon to carry out what He says. I expect it will not be very long before each of us runs up against some occasion when we shall have to decide whether to be rocks, or whether we will argue and wobble and be useless to God.

(3) THE ROCK MUST BE ABLE TO WEATHER THE STORM

Another thing about a rock is that it must be able to stand up to a storm. We know that this idea was in our Lord’s mind, because He once told a story of two men, each of whom built a house. One of them built on the sand and, of course, when the storm came, it just collapsed; but the other

one built on a rock, and when the storm came, it was able to weather it.

Jesus Himself was like a rock in a storm. You will remember the awful storm that broke over Him in the last week of His life. We read about Him in the Garden of Gethsemane just before the most furious part of the storm broke over Him. And He knew just how to prepare Himself to be a rock. He kneeled down and asked His Father to give Him strength to bear it. And, when the time came, everyone found that they could not beat Him, though one after another, the Chief Priests, Pontius Pilate, and Herod, all tried to make Him give in.

But what about Simon, who was only learning to become a rock? He ran into a nasty storm that night too. When the servants of the High Priests started talking to him in the palace, you remember, he collapsed rather badly, like the house built on the sand. And Jesus had tried to teach him how to prepare to act like a rock in the storm. Do you remember how? He told him to prepare for the storm in the same way as He Himself prepared for it: He told him to pray, so that when the storm came he would not collapse. But Simon had not yet learned this part of the way to become a rock. I do not suppose he ever forgot again after that night. It is the last time we ever hear of him being unable to stand up like a rock: never again would he not prepare for trial by praying. And, of course, that must have meant for him prayer every day of his life, for God's rock-men have to face storms, even if they are only small ones, every day.

It is quite easy to prove this part of the business of becoming rock-men. We can make experiments. Suppose we test it out during this week. We shall make a point each morning of just looking ahead, before we begin the day's work: very often we can see just where there may be a difficulty coming and we can ask our Father to give us the power to meet it. But, of course, many storms are quite unex-

pected, and we have to ask God to make us ready each day for whatever may come. I do not think anyone who made that experiment every day for a week would fail to learn that this is the way to become a rock-like person who can face a storm.

(4) THE ROCK MUST BE ABLE TO STAND ALONE

There is one thing more about a rock that is worth thinking about. In the North Sea there is a great rock, called Heligoland, that stands up all alone in the middle of a wide ocean: whatever storms it has to meet it has to meet them alone. But it has not only to meet storms, it has to serve one very useful purpose all alone. It is a resting-place, used by birds when they are making long journeys at the migrating seasons.

And a rock-person has very often to stand alone and be strong for God and useful to Him without the support of others. Simon had to learn that part of being a rock. Of course our Lord was a rock in that way: again and again He had to stand quite alone, when even His friends did not support Him. Quite at the end of St. John's Gospel there is a story of how our Lord taught St. Peter this part of the business of being a rock. It was by the side of the Lake of Galilee after the Resurrection.

You remember how our Lord met His friends by the lake-side and had breakfast with them. After breakfast he began talking to St. Peter and telling him of how he would have to serve Him. He warned him that it was not going to be a bit easy; he would have to do just what he was told, and he would have storms to meet. Well, St. Peter had already been prepared for that part of his work as a rock. But he seems not to have quite liked the prospect of perhaps having to do it alone. And so he turns to our Lord and asks whether John will have to do the same. And Jesus answered, "What I will that he shall do is not your affair:

your business is to follow Me and do your own part." A rock will very often have to stand alone. But it is not always easy. We often find ourselves thinking, "It is not fair. Why should I have to do this? So-and-so has not to." Or we think that we would do something, that we know is right, if only the others would too. A rock may often have to stand alone: Jesus often says "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me."

(5) CONCLUSION

Simon's nickname became his true name. We call him always by the name that Jesus gave him and made him able to deserve. He never forgot what Jesus had done for him, and years later when he wrote a letter to some of his friends, he called them "living stones." Simon had become the rock, and liked to think that all other Christians were called to be the same.

18. GOD'S CARE

R. W. CROOK

Thou God seest me.—Genesis xvi. 13.

(1) INTRODUCTION

ONE of the games we have all played and enjoyed is hide and seek. We begin it very early—almost as soon as we can walk. And even when we grow older we still play it, though we then call it by other names. Boy Scouts practise what is called spooring, which is following the tracks of people or animals left on the ground. The biggest of all games of hide and seek is war, when soldiers try to see the enemy without being seen. It is a good game to play—with other children or grown ups, so long as we don't try to play it with God.

“What,” you say, “play hide and seek with God! How can anyone hide from God?” Well, that is just it—you can't. But many people have tried, and still go on trying.

The first man that the Bible mentions—what was his name?—yes, Adam, he tried playing hide and seek with God. I once asked a church full of children “With whom did Adam play hide and seek?” They gave me the very natural answer, “Eve.” But Adam tried playing hide and seek with God. When he had done wrong, he tried to hide from God. Of course he couldn't, for it is a game that no one can play.

There was another man the Bible also tells of who was told by God to go and preach in a big city miles away beyond the desert; but he didn't want to go. He thought he could run away from God by sailing in a ship going to another part

of the world. Do you know that man's name? Yes, it was Jonah. He found he could not run away from God. God sees us, wherever we are, and knows everything we are thinking and saying.

But that does not mean that God is always looking to see if we are doing something wrong, so that He can punish us. Some people think that about God—that He likes punishing people for what they have done wrong. There have been children who have been told so much about God always seeing them that they have come to think that God is like a big eye up in the sky. He is nothing of the kind.

(2) THE BISHOP'S FRIEND

A small boy in a Lancashire town was taken one day to see an old woman called Esther Walmsley. Hanging on the wall of her small house was a framed text from the Bible. Old Esther pointed to it and asked the boy to take it down and bring it to her. The boy climbed on to a chair and took down the text. Esther then read the text aloud, and asked the boy to say it after her; which he did. The text was, "Thou God seest me."

"When you are older," Esther Walmsley said to the boy, "people will tell you that God is always watching you, to see if you are doing wrong, in order to punish you. I do not want you to think of it in that way, but I want you to take this framed text home with you and remember all your life that *God loves you so much that He cannot take his eyes off you.* That is what 'Thou God seest me' means."

This made a great impression on the small boy's mind. Old Esther never dreamed that she was giving the text to some one who was one day to be a bishop. The poor boy became Bishop of Chelmsford, and old Esther Walmsley's text always had a place of honour on the wall of his study. Several times a year the bishop took down the text and

showed it to young men who were going to be made clergy. What do we call it when men are made officers in the Church? That is right, ordination. At every ordination, the bishop used to tell the story of old Esther Walmsley and her text.

These words "Thou God seest me" were first spoken by Hagar, a woman who had been roughly turned out of the house of Abraham. After she was turned out she wandered for a long time in the wilderness. At last, tired and foot-sore, she came to a fountain. And, as she rested there, the angel of God found her, and asked her to go back to the house she had left. She went back, very much surprised that God's angel had found her even there. It was then that she said, "Thou God seest me," meaning that God sees us wherever we are.

(3) GOD'S LOVE

As the old woman said to the future bishop, this means that no one cares for us as much as God cares.

We know what God is like, because He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus, to this earth. God is like Jesus. Jesus used to take children in His arms and sit them on His bent elbow, where they were as happy as kings. Mothers used to bring their children to Him. What for? Yes, sometimes to be healed, but sometimes just that He might touch them. Children were attracted to Jesus. But there are parts of the world still where people believe in cruel gods. If anyone is ill, with a sickness called smallpox, they think a god of smallpox has settled in the trees around the house. So they sacrifice a cow, and think that the god of smallpox will be pleased and will take himself off somewhere else. Of course there is no such god. There is only one God, and He sees us and loves us as no one else loves.

But I have known people here in England who believe

that God is something like that god of smallpox. A fine young man was out of work, and his baby died. He said to me one day that he was out of work and the baby had died, because God was punishing him. Of course that was not true. God does not punish people like that. He is like Jesus, and Jesus would not have taken away the man's child to punish him. When you have been naughty—but of course you are not naughty—has anybody ever said to you "If you do that, God will never love you again"?

You will not go off and be naughty, will you, if I tell you that that is a big lie? God still loves us whatever we have done wrong, and will forgive us if we are truly sorry. We all like to be cared for and loved. There is no one who loves as God loves. I have heard a teacher say to a boy, "I have got my eye on you, young man." He meant he had seen what he had done wrong and was going to punish him if he went on doing wrong. God has His eye on us, but it is because His love is always caring for us.

(4) WHAT GOD EXPECTS

Old Esther's text also means that God is always noticing us. We like to be noticed. If someone comes into school and notices what someone else has done, but passes us by, we feel hurt. God is always noticing us. Some people are glad if anyone at all notices them, others like to be noticed by the few people they admire. God notices us all, and always expects big things of us.

Jesus said that the kind of life we live causes joy or pain in the presence of the angels of God. Don't listen to those who say that it does not matter what one boy or girl does. It matters so much that a thrill or sigh goes through heaven when we are brave and speak the truth, or when we are cowardly and tell a lie. The Bible also says that the good men and women who have lived on earth look down on us, just as

the great crowds at a football match watch the players, to see how we are living. But the one who notices us most and thinks most highly of us is God. We must try not to disappoint Him. And, because He sees us and is always present, we need not be afraid. Brave men have been afraid sometimes, and perhaps we shall be often. But with God, who is always watching us, there is no reason to be frightened.

We must try every day to live that day in God's sight. A man who lived a long time ago said Christians spoke as if their Lord were present. God sees us always and hears everything we say. When we remember that, we shall not think it a manly thing to say the silly things some children say; but we shall remember we are always with God, who sees us and cares for us, and for all we do and say.

19. CHARACTER, PRAYER AND PENITENCE

W. F. J. G. COLES

Members one of another.—Romans xii. 5.

(1) INTRODUCTION

THERE'S a story told of a wise old man, who had nine stalwart sons—fine upstanding lads of whom any father might be proud. Unfortunately they were a trouble to him, because they would never pull together or help each other. Each wanted his own way and the best of everything for himself. So the old father heard nothing, from morning to night, but sounds of quarrels and wrangling, and he grew more and more worried at the thought of what would happen to his sons when he was dead and they were left on their own.

Just before his death he determined to teach them a lesson. He sent for them all and told them to come to the room, where he was, and bring two sticks each with them, the sticks to be exactly alike. When they were come, he said to the first son, "Take one of your sticks, put it across your knee and break it." The son put the stick across his knee and broke it quite easily. Then, one after another, the father bade each of the others to do the same. Each broke his stick without any effort at all. "Now," said the father, "there are nine sticks left exactly like the others. Tie these nine together into a firm bundle." When this had been done he ordered each to try to break the bundle and, as you would expect, not one of the sons could do it.

“ Now you see,” said the old man, “ sticking together means being strong ; falling out with one another causes weakness.”

Something like this, I think, was in St. Paul’s mind when he wrote the words of our text to his friends at Rome—“ We are members one of another.” Some of the Christians there seem to have been giving themselves airs—“ thinking of themselves more highly than they ought to think,” is the way St. Paul puts it—and, because of this, they looked down on others. St. Paul reminds them that each one needs the help of others, and that the others need his help. No one can get along properly quite by himself.

Of course he was quite right. You and I could not live at all unless many other people worked to help us. Even this morning, since we got up, more people than we can count have had to assist us. Just think : we had bread for breakfast. Lots of men had a hand in sowing and reaping the corn for it, very possibly far away in Canada. Many more had to help in carrying it along the railways and over the sea till it came to England. Then there were the millers who ground it, and the baker who made it into bread. Our tea came from China or Ceylon, and brown or yellow men helped to grow it for us. Still more men or women helped to make the butter, the sugar, the clothes we are wearing, the boots in which we walked to church. So we could go on and, if we left nobody out whose labour has helped us this morning, I am sure we should have to count up to a very large number indeed.

That is God’s plan for the world, and now that people travel about so much we can understand it better than before. We are all members one of another, and we are all meant to help each other. At school you are learning to be clever, and capable, so that one day you may take your share in the world’s work. I don’t know what you will do, or what you hope to do. Some may help to produce food ; some may go into factories and make useful things, like

clothes or motor-cars; some may be nurses or doctors; some of the boys may become priests in Christ's Church.

(2) HELPING EACH OTHER TO LIVE

Talking of teachers and priests reminds us of the biggest thing that St. Paul meant, when he said we were members one of another; because he meant much more than that we should help each to have food and clothes and things like that.

We can't do without food or clothing, but we want more than these. We have a mind and a soul as well as a body, and these need help too. In fact, our souls and our minds are the very best part of us, and need help even more than our bodies. If we are really members one of another we shall have to help each other not only in keeping alive, but in living well.

St. Paul meant his friends to understand that everyone was to help in this. Not only what we should call teachers and clergymen, but every Christian as well.

One way in which we can all take our part in this is by our influence. That means the way that we change our friends by mixing with them. Some people—teachers and clergy, for instance—try to influence others. Others don't want to influence anybody at all.

But whether we wish it or not, the fact is that all do influence those around us. Anyone that we live with, anyone that we work with or play with must be, at any rate, a little bit different because they have been in our company. There was a man once who used to convince people of the truth of this by taking round a basket of apples. In his basket some apples were good and some were rotten ones. "See," he used to say, "the rotten apples are beginning to mark the good ones. If they are left together the good ones will soon be rotten too." That's like a boy with a bad

character. Such a boy, if he has a particular chum, may very well turn his chum into a bad character too. But if one bad character can injure another, it is quite as true the other way round. A good character in one person helps to improve character in other persons. Since we are members one of another, we have got to be particularly careful about our characters. If we are not, we shall certainly bring harm to some of the other members.

Then there are our prayers.

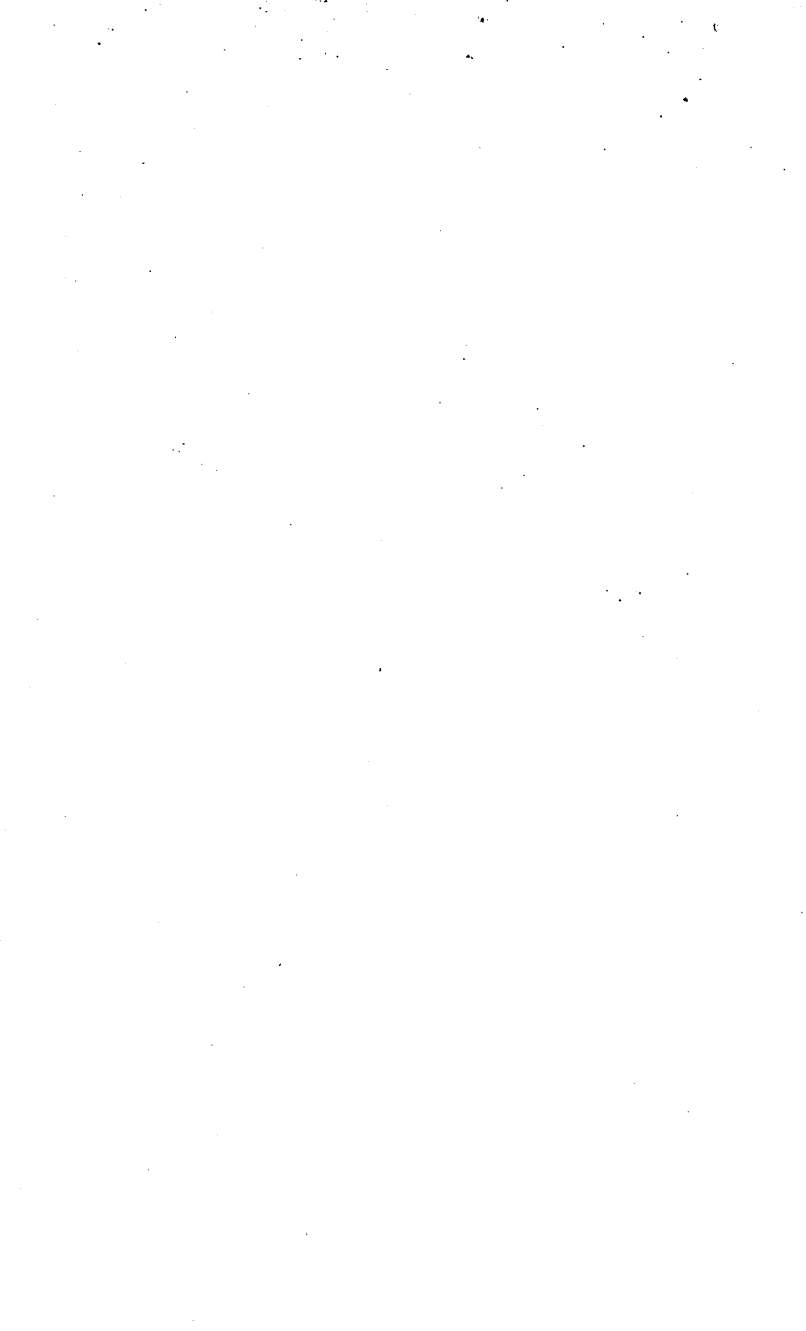
We are meant to help others by our prayers. In this service to-day we have just been kneeling down and asking God to help the king and his advisers in their difficult job. We have prayed for the Bishops and other clergy, that they may be able to do God's work: for sick people and for those in distress and for all sorts of other people. We have prayed for them, because you and I believe in prayer. We know that prayer does something. We are sure that praying for people helps them. Now, suppose that we had all been lazy this morning and stayed at home? Then we should have left all these prayers unsaid, and all those for whom we have prayed would have lost that help, and it would have been our fault. If we are good members one of another, we must certainly help each other with our prayers.

(3) OUR OWN EXAMPLE

There is just about enough time left to think of still another way in which we are meant to help each other. Suppose I put it to you as I used to do when I used to visit the schools in this diocese and talk to the different classes.

Sometimes I used to ask the top class a question, "Suppose every single man, woman and child in the world, all the people in your village, all the people in England, all the people in all the countries, were perfectly good, and not one single person did anything wrong at all, what would the

PRINTED AND BOUND IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED,
BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.



BV
4315
.L92

1518173

Lumb

The children's pulpit.

JUN 9 1946	C L Hendrick
	1156 E 57 th St
JUN 23 1946	W J H, 1156 E 57 th St 1946
FEB 11 1946	P. F. F. 1946
FEB 10 1946	J. L. Ray
JAN 11 1952	T. L. 1952 11/25/52 2-1-52
APR 1 1957	Allen D. Pfister
FEB 23 1957	
JUN 24 1957	7/1/57 JUN 22 1957
MAR 27 1958	E. G. 1958
APR 10 1958	473 1958
APR 10 1958	RENEWED APR 18 1958
JUL 8 1959	1/1/59 1959
JAN 22 1965	Bob Stiles

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY



11 576 380

BV4315
.L92

1518173

SWIFT HALL LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY



11 576 380